

TR Ericsson

I made the rose (the left panel) in 2016 and completed it recently by adding the note it came with. A rose in bloom, dried and pressed flat and printed with my mother's ashes. Minus the card the image felt incomplete, totemic, ambiguous and without context. Her mother's mother had passed two years prior to my mother sending me this card. She was still grieving. As anyone who loses someone knows, two years is nothing. She sent the white rose, her mother's favorite, the "first" of summer. She was likely feeling relief after a long Ohio winter and celebrating the change of seasons while still mourning the memory of her mother. The rose came in a card with a Mary Cassatt drypoint on the front, "Maternal Caress", I assume chosen deliberately. I was in Brooklyn, NY and had been for some time and she knew I was never coming home. It was letters and phone calls and occasional visits to the end of her life. May 21, 2001, she always dated her letters, just a few months before 9/11, the day the towers fell. I was home and saw the planes hit on TV, saw office papers floating down from the sky outside my window, saw people coming home covered in ashes, a man in a suit with a briefcase walking slowly along the sidewalk, head down, drained of everything but the will to walk. Maybe that's why I positioned the flower like this, ashes and loss and grieving but here the dead rose appears implanted and erect, resilient, something I understood by then regarding my own grief. Now the work feels completed, a story told, while still preserving the ambiguity and inevitable void that seems always to be there when you share a deeply personal experience.

Ella de Burca

*Is inhaling little clouds the worst for latent sleepers seeking dim?
Though ebb and flow are not reversed when pillows suffocate in whim.*

This is a line from a Poem I wrote soon after I first arrived in Belgium. I would spend a lot of time sleeping because I had little money and didn't know many people. Upon waking, I'd gorge on the poetry of Ted Hughes, thinking about human nature, its savage unnecessary violence and my role as an artist. The woman in this poem does not feel at home in society and chooses to remain outside, not using her limbs or her voice. It is her way of gaining back control. If you can't feel at home when you're asleep, when can you? Even if this home is imagined, rather than lived. Home is where we're from, but the road of retreat does not lead there. It's also a place ahead of us, one that we arrive at when we come to feel at home. It's something that's been torn from many people, and one that some people try to tear from themselves, like Crow pulls the worm from the eye. I, for one, have awoken, almost suddenly, and found myself there.

Ella Littwitz

*I am not one for many words.
Home is my habitat.
I am a native even if I'm strongly opposed to the idea,
A tumbleweed that remembers where its roots grew and
her journey began.*

Aziz Hazara

Normalization of asymmetric warfare, coupled with interventionist culture, has created a landscape in which every object, every sound, holds a point of reference to memory, to warfare, to the everyday... Kabul as a landscape of leftovers became a site in which most of my works take place or refer to ... part of this is a fluid soundscape that is constantly reshaping itself, changing its form, its visuals and metaphors as it assumes both distance and proximity as necessary perspectives for understanding its context...

A PLACE FOR THE AFFECTIONS: DWELLING IN ANGUISH (TORMENT) AND LOVE

Marcin Dudek

Home is where it all starts. It shaped everything for me. The origin. Where we grow up. Our early days. It is the starting point of everything. Routines and rhythms. Growing up in the projects creates a collective experience. You feel you are living in turmoil. The individual is flattened into a collective experience.

Home has a significant place in my work. There is so much tension there. So much to talk about in terms of formative experiences.

The intensity of the emotions of home... is an aspect of my biography that I rarely talk about. This tension is profound. The claustrophobic environment was so explosive. Somehow I never... my generation was compromised into small spaces, boxes that created a sense of life from concrete..

James "Yaya" Hough

The prison experience, the carceral experience, without art, is just a nihilistic experience. It's a confrontation with meaninglessness, hopelessness, in the purest way. (Art Forum, May 10, 2021)

Vivienne Koorland

WHAT can you say about HOME when our hearts and minds are once more filled with sights and sounds of people violently DYING for it?

My Mother left Poland in 1946 with one bag containing NOT A SINGLE PHOTOGRAPH, and not even one of her murdered parents.

My Father's Father fled Kharkov for Cape Town in 1917 carrying only his FIDDLE, his livelihood.

I arrived in New York with two suitcases in 1982.

I could not bring my precious 1965 Elna sewing machine with me. Unforgettably, a friend carried it to me later (who does that?) – it weighed 30lbs. Transferring weighty stuff has been my lot. People ask: what kind of paintings do you make? By this, they mean ABSTRACT? Or...? I say "BIG AND HEAVY".

Strangely, I don't remember what I was carrying in 1978 on the day I left my beloved Cape Town, South Africa FOREVER. I suppose the agony of HOMESICKNESS blotted that out.

But I can estimate it would take THREE THIRTY FOOT TRUCKS to move me now.

Emmanuel Van der Auwera

When I was a kid, my parents built their – our – home, in a small village in Alsace. While the house was still a bare and boxy concrete structure sticking out from a muddy field, I was asked to imagine how I wanted my room to be. I requested everything to be left blank: the walls, the ceiling, the furniture, everything but one large wallpaper of the World trade center. That was before 9/11, and for vague reasons I was obsessed with the building. Maybe the skyline of New York was the furthest thing from the Alsatian village my young mind could imagine. Years later we went to New York and I visited the building. Memories of the souvenir shop at the "window of the world" floor, with its tiny model of the Twin Towers in a snow globe, are engraved in my mind. I have a home video on HIS of this trip. Home videos are fascinating to me. They look and feel authentic, and all the while they are performative, in the sense that the purpose of the record is to preserve private memory, usually of happy times.

A PLACE FOR THE AFFECTIONS: DWELLING IN ANGUISH (TORMENT) AND LOVE

27/04 – 18/06/2022

Harlan Levey Projects 1080

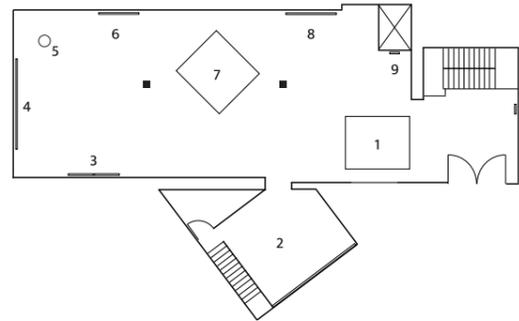
Rue Isidoor Teirlinckstraat 65, 1080 Brussels, Belgium

A Place for the Affections: dwelling in anguish (torment) and love brings together eight living artists, born in eight countries and four different decades, all grappling with ideas of migration, placemaking, disconnection, individuality, geopolitics, and myth making to explore personal and public conceptions of home. From trite and wide-spread to profound and eccentric, home is a loaded concept packed with a dizzying array of emotions and implications. Formative to the ways we understand ourselves and how we relate to others, it encompasses the places we come from, the spaces we long for, and the ways we connect with the more-than-human world.

This exhibition develops from a long-running conversation between Harlan Levey and SCAD Museum of Art curator DJ Hellerman about being at home while far from home, of returning home in the knowledge that it's no longer your home, and the fraught question of whether it is possible to return at all. Through sculpture, video, drawing, painting, performance and installation, the exhibition explores notions of home as a place to hold our affections, as a failed idea, as a tender haunting, and a shared ground for historic events. These concepts wander between security and instability, sovereignty and mythology, torment and love. The exhibition features various forms of social abstraction, utopist deconstruction, mediated realism and a shared rejection of the past as a nostalgic vehicle.

In many of the works, there are intimate archival elements, from the map in Vivienne Koorland's painting *Pegasus* that she used while traveling in South Africa in the early 1960s, the shattered bedroom windows of Marcin Dudek's installation *Head in the Sand*, the prison stationary on which James "Yaya" Hough's drawings are made, the card from TR Ericsson's mother that he amplifies, Ella Littwitz's referencing of the sea squill's biblical history, or Ella de Burca's crumbling floor-based installation *Defiance: Roof Without Walls*. Aziz Hazara's film *Rehearsal* also illustrates a personal proximate approach, which is both joyful and loaded with torment, while Emmanuel Van der Auwera's film *Home* uses publicly shared, found footage of military homecomings as a way to demonstrate the impact of media in our lives and the pressure social media networks apply to perform, rather than to engage with an authentic lived experience.

As a whole, *A Place for the Affections: dwelling in anguish (torment) and love* offers post-historical readings of socio-political turmoil in Afghanistan, Ireland, Israel, Poland, South Africa and the United States, which affirms James Baldwin's suggestion that "perhaps home is not a place but simply an irrevocable condition." At a time when millions of people all over the world are seeking refuge, this condition comes with an urgent need for shelter. Home, whether an idea, emotion or physical structure, involves a place where one may rest. Coupling these notions with the impetus of the exhibition, Maya Angelou's conception of home offers a fitting conclusion and framework for contextualizing the exhibition, "The ache for home lives in all of us. The safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned."



- 1 Ella de Burca
Defiance (Roof Without Walls), 2017
Concrete tiles cast from a 1932 roof tile
Variable Dimensions
(One tile: 19cm x 29cm x 2cm - 7 1/2 x 11 3/8 x 3/4 in)

We are continually reaching new definitions of ourselves both individually and socially, to which the past posts pieces of itself, illustrating change. One such communicative, inscribed on a humble roof-tile, silently declares: 'DEFIANCE'. This, along with the 'Saorstát Éireann' logo, was assiduously inscribed on all products of Irish labor during the economic-war that preceded Ireland's liberation proper, in 1938, from 800 years of British occupation. Ireland refused to repay debt that had been forced upon it by Britain as a condition of leaving the United Kingdom. Britain responded to this turnaround by choking Irish trade with obscene import duties, effectively paralyzing the fledgling Irish economy. Understanding economic servitude to be the complete anathema to political independence, the Irish labor classes strove on, bearing their agony with pride, carving 'DEFIANCE' into all they created: The Republic was finally free, financially and ideologically, from all colonial influence. In this work Ella de Burca examines the legacy of political idealism by recasting the roof tiles as floor tiles and placing them on the ground, for your feet to stamp on.

- 2 Aziz Hazara
Rehearsal, 2020
Single channel video, color, sound
1 min 5 sec

In *Rehearsal* (2020), a boy recreates the sound of gunfire as he sits on the shoulders of another who swings him side to side like a weapons mount. In line with Hazara's general approach, the work straddles the boundaries of the political and the poetic, the playful and the painful.

- 3 TR Ericsson
May 21, 2001, 2022
Graphite, resin and funerary ash on whitened raw muslin
254 x 203.2 cm, 127 x 101.6 cm (per panel)
100 x 80 in, 50 x 40 in (per panel)

For the past 20 years, TR Ericsson has expanded on an investigation and reinterpretation of a deteriorating archive of family artifacts, documents, writings, and photographs. His ongoing project 'Crackle & Drag', makes a personal struggle public, coming to terms with the archive's power to determine the past and the future, even as it vanishes in time. Many works in this project are made with unusual materials including nicotine, alcohol and funerary ash. Ericsson's nicotine portraits were recently recognized by the Smithsonian Museum as a finalist in The National Portrait Gallery's triennial Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition. His ash works appear in numerous private and public collections as, according to the artist "I am in the process of not only spreading my mother's ashes into private and institutional frameworks but more importantly spreading her life story. She was uniquely able to receive others, to listen and provide comfort in the harshest and most difficult moments of personal pain. I consider every work I've made about her, or of her, as a symbol of her love, devotion and selflessness. Lessons our world desperately needs."

- 4 Vivienne Koorland
PEGASUS, 2020
Oil paint, printed roadmap from 1960, on stitched linen and burlap
213.5 x 249 cm
84 1/8 x 98 1/8 in

South African artist Vivienne Koorland's hand-hewn, habitually recycled paintings – along with her maps, poems, songs and stories – explore the vexed problematic of language and the impossibility of narrative in painting. Koorland explains, "if anything is worth looking at or doing, it can't all be on the surface. I need to peel it away." Eschewing conventional objective painting practice on the one hand, and pure abstraction on the other, her representations on linen and stitched burlap of highly acculturated kitsch images of plants and animals, words, musical notes and quotations address the contested terrain of collective experience through overdetermined revisions of history, while trafficking in the tropes that signify them. For Koorland, watching the process of rewriting and institutionalizing history, which strips the individual bare of their own personal struggles with homesickness is galling, fascinating, and central to her approach to painting.

Regarding herself as a de-skilled 'History Painter' whose project is subverting prevailing constructions of history, in a collision of accident and purpose where no trace is deemed too insignificant, she re-makes drawings, fragments and markings by often deracinated, forgotten persons or unwitting artists into monumental paintings as an act of triumph and validation over rupture, ruin and annihilation. Her painting *Pegasus*, flies between a 1960s map, an 18th century drawing of Table Mountain in South Africa, a 2021 headline, and a drawing of the logo for NSO Group, a black-listed Israeli surveillance firm. Tropes are stitched together through the threaded filter of colonialism. The thin lines illustrating Table Mountain and a row of colorful flowers indigenous to the southern cape of South Africa stand in for an idea of home as mythology, branding and social upheaval collide in an organized stream of memories, unpaved roads and the seeds beneath them. Part memory, part affirmation, Koorland's painting is an act of resistance and survival.

- 5 Ella Littwitz
The Sword in the Stone, 2020
Bronze
80 x 55 x 40 cm
31 1/2 x 21 5/8 x 15 3/4 in

Drimia maritima (also known as sea squill) is a plant with deep roots and toxic leaves, making it hard to pull out of the ground. Its features connect it to the notion of "butts and bounds," which defines the abutments (from the French *bout*, "the end") and boundaries of an estate. Usually consisting of descriptive features—trees, stone outcroppings, and so on—abutments are used for identification in legal deeds and contracts. This practice is described in the Bible (Genesis 23:17). According to biblical tradition, *Drimia maritima* was used by Joshua to delineate the land of Canaan among the twelve tribes of Israel, following their crossing of the Jordan River after forty years of wandering in the desert. This work first appeared in Littwitz's solo exhibition *A High Degree of Certainty* at the Center for Contemporary Art in Tel Aviv, Israel, which featured a body of work developed during frequent research trips to the Jordan-Israel border, on the southern part of the Jordan River, located on the colliding rift of two tectonic plates. The main site of such trips was Qasr al-Yahud, which is believed to be where the Israelites crossed the Jordan River into the land of Canaan. According to the Christian tradition, it is also the place where St. John baptized Jesus Christ. After the 1967 occupation, due to the many infiltrations and chases that took place in it, this area was closed by the military and consequently mined. Littwitz's interest in this specific stretch of land stems from its being a cross-path of religions, geography and politics - as well as of water, soil and sky. It is a landscape that defines itself in terms of mythologies and beliefs through momentous transitions. Her works echo the Biblical and modern narratives associated with this area, presenting us with diverse examples of transition, transfiguration and the formation of political constructs through acts of belief. By bronze casting ephemeral plants and lumps of soil, Littwitz comments on the improbability of fixing concepts and truisms, both into natural phenomenon and cultural constructs, by removing symbolic objects associated with this locus.

- 6 Marcin Dudek
Meta, 2022
Acrylic paint, ash, steel dust, image transfer, medical tape, uv varnish on wood and aluminium
165 x 115 cm
65 x 45 1/4 in

Meta recalls the council estate where Dudek grew up and one family's apartment in particular. The Polish title loosely translates to "finish line" though Dudek describes it more as a derelict dwelling, a place of illegal activity where people gather to consume mind bending substances, bringing the title towards its Greek origins of transcendence, detachment and experience outside the physical realm. During communist times every district in Krakow had its own "meta," which was a place to buy drugs and illegal alcohol and became the source of local legends for criminal activity.

Between 1994 and 1996, Dudek skipped school to stay in this Meta for weeks at a time. He recalls the owner of the flat "letting go" as his home became a haven for addicts, hosting a sad and savage sort of party that went on for two years; breaking up his furniture, his doors, his marriage and his body in a downfall darkened by drunkenness and violence. By the time of his death he'd been evicted from the apartment and was found dead just outside of it. What we see here is an aerial view of the apartment – living room, corridor, kitchen, kids' rooms and so on. Most of the activity happened in the living room. Dudek tries to recreate ideas of youth and drastic disrespect through silhouettes of random people making their pilgrimage towards the living room as traces of normality deteriorate into morbid chaos and absolute demolition. He illustrates the apartment from memory, burning and breaking up the composition, killing the architecture as if it were a body bludgeoned with booze, one shot after another.

- 7 Marcin Dudek
Head in the Sand, 2015
Wood, plasterboard, glass, steel, concrete, smoke grenade
350 x 250 x 250 cm
137 3/4 x 98 3/8 x 98 3/8 in

Growing up in a communist-era housing estate in Poland, the idea of interior space was reduced to small, rectangular boxes. Living rooms, bedrooms, and businesses were delimited by cold, geometric walls made of identical prefab concrete slabs. These drab blocks rise up into various aspects of Marcin Dudek's work. In his practice, architecture is never neutral. It is a space which is often biographical and informed by the conditions of his childhood. Performances and installations which work with these architectural dimensions allow the artist to relive past experiences, and as a viewer they allow us to walk through the life of the artist and his family. *Head in the Sand* is an installation, which is accompanied by a performance first enacted in 2015 and rethought for this exhibition. The performance considers the younger Dudek escaping his confines through drawing and painting, removing himself from his community and aligning himself not only with the hooligan culture he had been part of, but also with Polish avant garde art movements and the globalized contemporary art scene. Unlike the majority of his performances in which orange is used to reference football subculture and the international sign of distress, here blue smoke and lines pay homage to Edward Krasinski in a dialogue that draws parallels between materials, gestures and generations.

- 8 Emmanuel Van der Auwera
Home, 2015
HD Video, color
17 min, 18 sec

Home is a collection of roughly five hundred home videos of the same sequence: a US marine returning from deployment in "the War on Terror" is reunited with his dog, while the scene is lovingly recorded by a spouse. In these simple, intimate encounters, a cascade of complex emotions plays out, which attests to the programmatic expression of our joys and sorrows. Through heartwarming repetition, conformity unravels insight into a variety of social phenomena.

- 9 James "Yaya" Hough
Untitled, 2008-2016
Paper, ink, pencil
21.6 x 27.9 cm
8 1/2 x 11 in

On view is work from a larger series of line drawings and watercolors that delineate the economy of desire that emerges from within America's carceral system. All are drafted on what Hough refers to as "institutional paper:" any state-issued documents required to process an inmate's daily activities from weekly cafeteria menus to questionnaires for inmates to complete on triplicate copy paper. A majority of this series was made during approximately eight years while Hough was incarcerated at Graterford Penitentiary.

The delicate lines of the ballpoint pen drawings render the inhuman aspects of incarceration through a visual language that Hough has developed over time. In them, an amalgamation of various mythologies such as an oversized fox head recall the sly fox of European folklore, and references to American culture, capitalism, and white supremacy emerge through depictions of chicken wings, lightbulbs, dollar bills, and ropes. One of the repeating figures found in the drawings is an anonymous human covered from head to toe in a white bodysuit with a stitching down its center. These faceless men are bound and suspended by ropes that carry them through an endless system of labor. In one drawing they stand tall with rectangular cavities receding into their chest like cells repeating in architecture. Mechanization of the body is also present in the explicit depiction of sexual encounters which oscillate between fantasy, humiliation and violence, often taking place as a part of a production line.