

Each month, Jessica Gysel invites an artist to take up space under the title I See / You Mean. A nod to the title of the 1970 collage novel by New York writer Lucy Lippard, an editorial snapshot, a carte blanche with an open ending.

MARLIE MUL

OBJECTS

and THINGS

I See / You Mean
by Jessica Gysel

OPENING UP SPACE FOR FUN and SPECTACLE

Sometime around 2012 I was walking through the Frieze Art Fair in London and almost stepped into a kind of trompe l'oeil oil stain. The 'stain' turned out to belong to a series of works displayed on the floor of a gallery booth, not literal oil stains but solid black rain puddles made of resin and sand and sometimes a little bit of trash — a rather minimal and radical sculptural gesture for an art fair, I thought. I encountered them several times later in my own house which I had rented out to a curator for a while. He had installed one of the pieces in my living room.

All this says something about the maker, Marlie Mul. She's someone who's not afraid to tackle the sérieux, object fetishisation and the underlying outrageousness of the art world. There's a large floppy hammer made of silicone (*Hammer*, 2016), an oversize cheese grater that doubles as a dress (*Silly Canvas*, 2015 — what a title!), a foaming aluminium bucket filled with artificial snow and cigarette butts (*Cigarette Hedgehog*, 2012).

But Marlie's work also speaks to the human condition: our collective predicament under late capitalism, even amidst signs of its collapse. This has led her to experiment with the fluidity of internet aesthetics, to challenge patriarchal power structures and to intuitively gravitate towards 'something more quotidian, present everywhere and recognisable by everyone'. An example of this was the cancellation of her solo exhibition at the Gallery of Modern Art in Glasgow in 2017. After months of committed work but no clear exhibition framework provided by the institution — as well as choppy correspondence, no artist fee and no budget confirmation — Marlie proposed to advertise the cancellation of the show within the exhibition space itself, in the form of gigantic billboards showing an empty cardboard model of the museum in her studio. In the end, the cancelled exhibition, which made space for 150 events organised by the general public based on an open call, attracted more than 108,000 visitors and was a hot topic in the media.

Having spent time in different countries (after spells in the UK and Berlin, Marlie now divides her time between Brussels and the Netherlands), and possessing a natural talent for bringing people together, Marlie's recently been organising small happenings under the moniker Hermany. These are usually hosted in her basement, in a local bar or in spaces of friends.

'Hermany was something I set up quite spontaneously when the writer Aurelia Guo visited Brussels and asked me if I knew a place for her to read from her new collection of writing, and I realised I didn't know anyone I felt I could ask. So, I just organised it myself, came up with a name, designed a logo, asked some other people I knew who were dealing with writing, put myself in as some filler, designed a flyer with the names, and posted to social media'. Hermany as in 'Germany' but with an H: many hers.

Marlie stresses that it started as a lightweight side project and that she intends to keep it that way: something that exists in parallel to her busy artistic practice and serious commitments in education. She's currently a coordinator of the Master in Visual Arts and chair of the Course Committee of Visual Arts at KASK in Ghent, after having been the director of a Master's programme at HEAD (Haute École d'Art et de Design) in Geneva these past years. Yet it's clear from the following pages that the Hermany project has initiated offspring, born from Marlie's flair for fashion and fun, as in 'Fashion Time!' which she developed with students from her programme in Geneva. She says: 'I never formulated any of these ideas in this way before, but in a way many of the projects that I do are a form of "drag", as in "gallery drag", "project space drag", "fashion label" or "branding drag". And I guess I didn't intend for it all to be so curated, rather for it to make less sense. I wanted to keep things weird and with a "just do it" attitude, to work with friends and trust them as artists and makers. Setting up an art platform is also hopefully opening up a space for risk'. And in the meantime, it adds some fun and colour to the Brussels scene.

MARLIE MUL, *Puddle (Black Tracks)*, 2013, courtesy the artist and Croy Nielsen, Vienna.



HERMANY presents: "dans la cave"

an exhibition in a cave in brussels with works by:

with works by: ANTHONY NGOYA
 NAOKI KARATHANASSIS SAM COTTINGTON
 AMAT GUEYE STEPHANE ABITBOL
 BECKET MWN ALEX VIVIAN GAIA VINCENSINI
 LILI REYNAUD DEWAR FABIEN KARP
 MICHELE DI MENNA JAMES WHITTINGHAM
 MARLIE MUL RASA EL FABULA MARK HAND

★ MAY 9 2020 - LOCKDOWN TIME - FULL ONLINE COVERAGE - STAY TUNED! ★

HERMANY presents: "ding dong"

new date! opening MARCH 12th

an exhibition by Michele Di Menna

OPENING: SATURDAY 12.03.2022 / FROM 12:00-18:00
 ** HOURLY ACTIVATION OF THE WORKS BY THE ARTISTI **
 AVENUE JEF LAMBEAUX 23, 1060 ST-GILLES, BRUXELLES

Solo exhibition and performance all day

HERMANY hosts: "FASHION CAFE"

OUTFITS DRINKS INTERACTIVE FASHION
 BOURSE BOBO'S LIVE FASHION SHOW
 FASHION EVENT!!! DJ AMAZING VIEW
 FASHION PHOTOGRAPHER BRUSSELS CHIC
 UNINVITED GUESTS BAR! FASHION MODELS
 HATS BUSTS LIVE MAKING STREET CASTING
 ACCESS ALL AREAS STAY ALL DAY HANG OUT!!
 CLUTCHES EXQUISITE CORPSE FASHION
 HANDMADE CRAFTY! ELEGANT HANDBAGS

JULY 27TH at KANTINE

a project by: HURTENCE / maddy thornalley + RUE PAUL DEVAUX 3
 ** EXQUISITE CORPSE / valerie kong ** 1000 BRUSSELS
 * AIDAN DUFFY ***** * 5TH FLOOR! (with lift)
 ***** MARLIE MUL *****
 ***** EILIDH NUALA DUFFY ***** EVENT: 7PM-12PM

HERMANY presents 2 concerts by: battle-ax dan bodan

TUESDAY 09.07.2019 / 21:00
 NEW RUSTICANA
 CHAUSSEE D'ALSEMBERG 97
 1060 ST-GILLES, BRUXELLES

Group exhibition in a basement organised by Marlie Mul with Amat Gueye

Concerts

HERMANY presents readings by: waldo pardon aurelia guo marlie mul louis kiock

SAT 20.04.2019 / READINGS AT 19:00
 CHAUSSEE D'ALSEMBERG 97
 1060 BRUXELLES

Readings in a bar

Background image: "HERMANY hosts: Fashion Café", installation view, July 27th 2019 at Kantine in Brussels.

"Fashion Café" was a project by Marlie Mul organised in collaboration with Eilidh Nuala Duffy, Aidan Duffy, Maddie Thornalley and Valerie Kong. Here HERMANY was hosted by Kantine, an exhibition space initiated by Perri MacKenzie and Kevin Gallagher between 2018 and 2023 in Brussels.

The event included models, a fashion photographer, a stage, lights, various outfits and fashion items made during the day by visitors and the project Exquisite Corpse, regular 'live fashion show' moments, hats, busts, a 'fashion soundtrack', and a bar that supplied various drinks that ran through tubes around the space. Drinks could be tapped into hand-painted Fashion Café glasses.

Other images: promotional material for HERMANY events organised between 2019-2023 in various locations.

HERMANY presents: "funny demographic"

a group exhibition with works by:

VALENTINA LIERNUR
 NELSON SCHAUB
 VALERIE KONG
 MONIKA STRICKER

OPENING: FRIDAY 06.10.2023 / FROM 17:00-22:00
 LIVE PERFORMANCE BY NELSON SCHAUB AT 20:30!!
 AVENUE JEF LAMBEAUX 23, 1060 BRUXELLES

Group exhibition in a basement

to read from her new book of poetry in Brussels, and I realised I didn't know where to could ask. Self-organising was the most fun and efficient solution.

The project came up for the first time when the writer Aurelia Guo asked me if I knew of a place for writers, performers, entertainers, and in various media, without a specific location, regularity, or format.

Tubes

Taps

Hand-painted drinking glasses

Hats by Hurtence

Busts by Aidan Duffy

"FASHION TIME" leads to the project "Fashion Time!"

FASHION TIME



It's Fashion Time!!!

Fashion, fashion, fashion – what is it even? Is it don't believe the hype or is it high aesthetics, is it in or is it out, is it stretchy, is it straight, is it ever worth the WAIT?? And the fashion system: is there really a reason when everything is directly out of season?

One thing we do know is that fashion can be ANYTHING and fashion can be EVERYWHERE and NOWHERE at the same time. Fashion is ELITIST, fashion is ASPIRATIONAL, fashion is wannahave and wannabe, but we all know that you don't need to be an expert to jump on the fashionista train, or actually, that we are all fashion experts!

Maybe calling what we will do in this project FASHION is just an incentive to be hyper-creative and inspired to make things, beautiful things, serious things, funny things, fast things, laborious things, crafty things, trashy things, wearable things, impossible things, things we need, things we dream, things we don't want to go onto a gallery wall but that we want to carry on our bodies!

Fashion that is furniture, fashion that is food, fashion for friends, fashion that is chunky, fashion that is funky, fashion that is superfluous, fashion that goes deep, fashion that connects us, fashion that's too small, fashion that's for no one, and a fashion that's for 'all'.

In this time where artists are sponsored and dressed by fashion brand friends and buddies, where excessive garments represent a network of insiders and outsiders, working class is fetishized, in a time where trends are developed so close to you and are so quickly digested, what kind of garments are relevant to us?

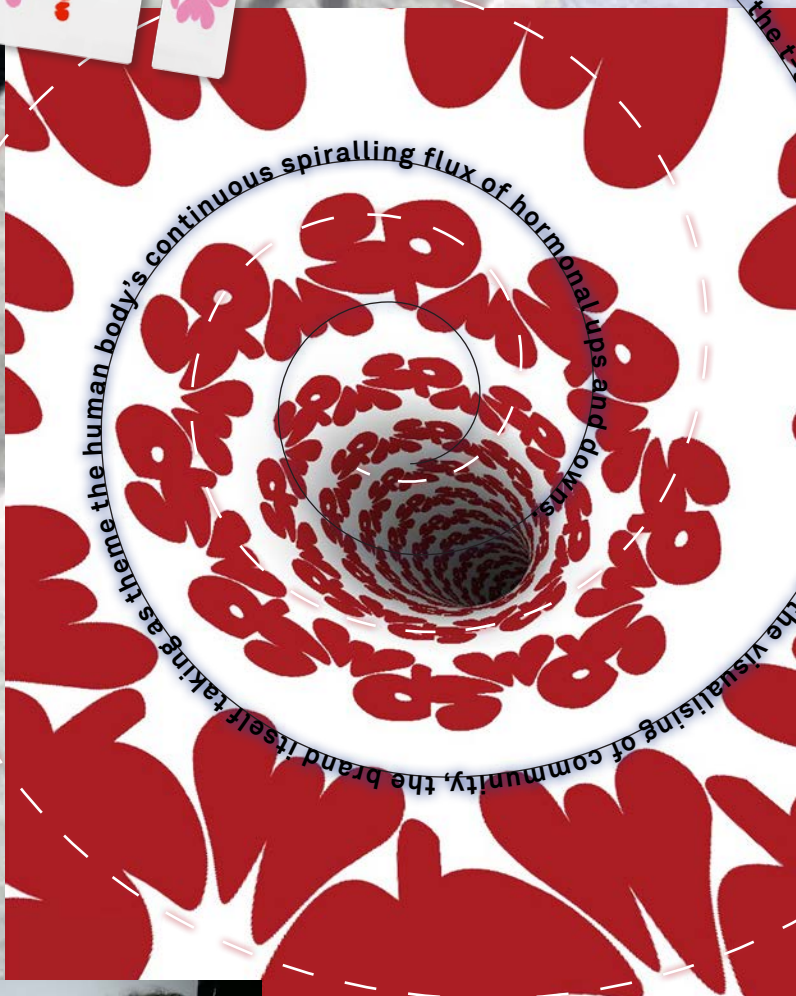
"Fashion Time!" took place in an educational context as a part of the master in fine arts programme at HEAD-Genève: The above text was a prompt, written as an invitation to the students to work together with me on a research project that took as starting point the potential that lies in the materiality and spectacle of fashion for art making and display. The outcome of this project was an event and exhibition at the project space Mala in Lisbon (which is run by Henrique Loja and Sofia Montanha) in May 2022. The text became a manifesto for the project.

"Fashion Time!" is a project by Marlie Mul in collaboration with: Alpha Sy (clothes), Azize Ferizi, bambi (clothes and accessories), Charlotte Durand (drinks), Clara Roumegoux (graphic design and signage), Clarisse Dagod (coiffure nul hair and make-up), Federico Nipoli (film), Jeremy Dafflon (clothes and accessories), Marlène Charpentié (giant shoes), Mina Squalli-Houssaini (soundtrack), Sarah Benslimane (accessories), Yann Biscaut, Zahra Hakim (clothes). Thank you to Mala, HEAD-Genève and all the models! Photos by Beatriz Pereira.





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PMS collaboration with Hulfe!



PMS collaboration with Hulfe!

