

AROUND THE WORKS BY MUTLU ÇERKEZ

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# AUDITIONS FOR AN UNWRITTEN OPERA

# 2017 MARCH 9—APRIL 9

WITH ANTONIA BAEHR, JULIET CARPENTER, JULIAN DASHPER, JESSE DARLING,  
EGEMEN DEMIRCI, PEDRO GÓMEZ-EGAÑA, LÉULI ESHRÁGHI, MARCO FUSINATO, DELIA  
GONZALEZ, ÖZLEM GÜNYOL & MUSTAFA KUNT, ON KAWARA, HANNE LIPPARD,  
CALLUM MORTON, SERKAN ÖZKAYA, RUTH WOLF-REHFELDT, JEFF WALL PRODUCTION  
AND FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES

14 JULY—8 OCTOBER



## **MANUAL**

**Key works by the artist Mutlu Çerkez are brought into dialogue with contemporary and historical pieces from different artistic positions. In an experimental manner, the curatorial exhibition concept enables, on the one hand, diverse insights into conceptual art since the 1960s, and on the other, emotions—from joy to grief—allowing them to resound, in their gradations, throughout the rooms. This combination of conceptual thinking and emotional sensitivity is a unique attempt to experience Çerkez’s work in different ways. Thus the exhibition revolves around his long-standing project for an “unwritten opera.” During the exhibition period, this imaginary as well as real theatrical space will be activated by live performances, guided tours, and artist talks.**

**Çerkez was an artist who has remained largely unknown in Germany until now. His works combine painting, conceptual art, and visionary artistic thinking into a body of work of impressive individuality and quality. Born in England, Çerkez studied art in Melbourne. Also in Australia, he celebrated his first artistic successes with solo exhibitions. At the end of the 1990s, he participated in biennials in São Paulo and Istanbul. Due in part to his early death, his body of work is limited, yet immensely complex and profound. Becoming involved in his artistic cosmos is indispensable for developing a sense of his attitude as an artist.**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Monash University Museum of Art | MUMA, Melbourne, Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Griffith University Art Museum, Australia, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne, PALAS, Australia, Michael Lett Gallery, Auckland, Sultana Gallery, Paris, Zilberman Gallery and ChertLüdde, Berlin, and Hot Wheels Athens.

As well as Charlotte Day, Marco Fusinato, Callum Morton, Pierre Bal Blanc, Florian Lüdde, and Andrew Kachel.

Jeff Wall Production, which took the title of his first published critical text on the eponymous artist as a signature for his future projects. In 1992, he made the video *Contrat de travail [Employment Contract]* in relation to his experience as a performer for the work of the artist Félix Gonzalez-Torres. He has published numerous texts and collaborated on film and exhibition productions with artists.

**On Kawara** (1933 Kariya, Japan - 2014 New York, USA) was a conceptual artist with Japanese roots who lived in New York from 1965. In its reduction and uniqueness, his work is still current and remarkable today: time and space are the themes of his art. Thus, since the mid-1960s, he created works that declare the day of their creation as a motif (*Date paintings, Today series*). The series comprises over 2000 works.

The standardized picture format with white acrylic paint on a dark background is reduced and formally stringent. The series explores our awareness of time and space - on both a personal and historical level. On Kawara was also a representative of Mail Art. Between 1970 and 1979 he created the series / *AM STILL ALIVE*, for which he sent telegrams to various friends and colleagues. The only content of the telegrams was the sentence: "I AM STILL ALIVE. ON KAWARA." On Kawara led a nomadic and reclusive life.

**Hanne Lippard** (\*1984, Milton Keynes, UK) graduated in graphic design from the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam in 2010. Her art is characterized by her voice, which becomes an artistic medium. Writing is the starting point for performances, readings, sound recordings and installations. In sound sculptures, the audience is attracted by Hanne Lippard's vocal presence in space and encouraged to linger. As poetic as the situations may seem at first, many of her works also have a political content. In them, Hanne Lippard mixes personal thoughts with public texts such as advertising or news articles. Her recent artistic research experiments with the female body as a sound body, as well as with the conscious and unconscious automatization of language and the spoken word. Her work also includes short films. Hanne Lippard lives in Berlin. Her work was most recently awarded the Prize of the National Gallery Berlin.

**Callum Morton** (\*1965, Montréal, Canada)'s installation and sculptural practice is inspired by architecture and the built environment. His work has consistently addressed the "architecture of experience": the moment of encounter between viewer and object or viewer and built environment. Often, his works explore human interaction with architectural space through scale models and

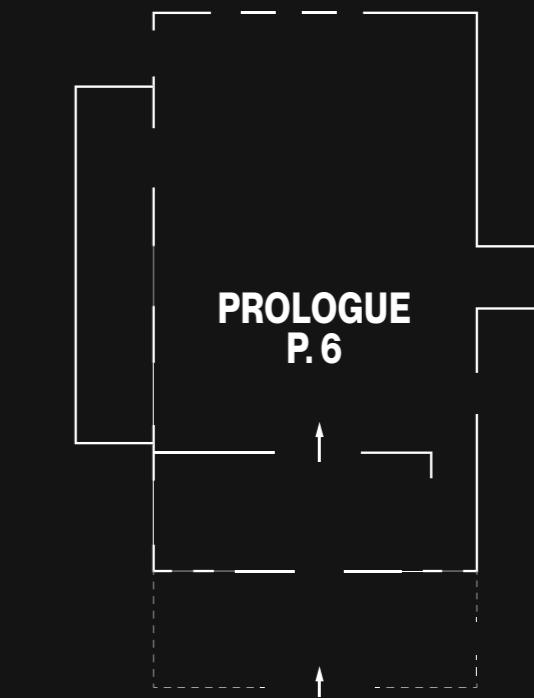
facades of well-known buildings. For example, Morton represented Australia at the 2007 Venice Biennale with a scale model of his childhood home, designed and built in the 1970s in a modernist style by his architect father. He lives and works in Melbourne.

**Serkan Özkaya** (\*1973, Istanbul, Türkei) is a Turkish-American conceptual artist working on the themes of appropriation and reproduction. He attended Istanbul University, where he earned both a bachelor's and master's degree in art. Serkan Özkaya continued his studies at Bard College. He frequently moves outside of traditional art spaces, sometimes producing multiple versions of his works, including his most famous work, *David* (inspired by Michelangelo). With his *Dear Sir or Madam* series (1996-2009), Serkan Özkaya gave a humorous twist to his conceptual approach: in a collection of letters he sent to institutions and curators, he documented an unintentionally comical side of bureaucracy when, for example, he asked to be allowed to hang the *Mona Lisa* upside down.

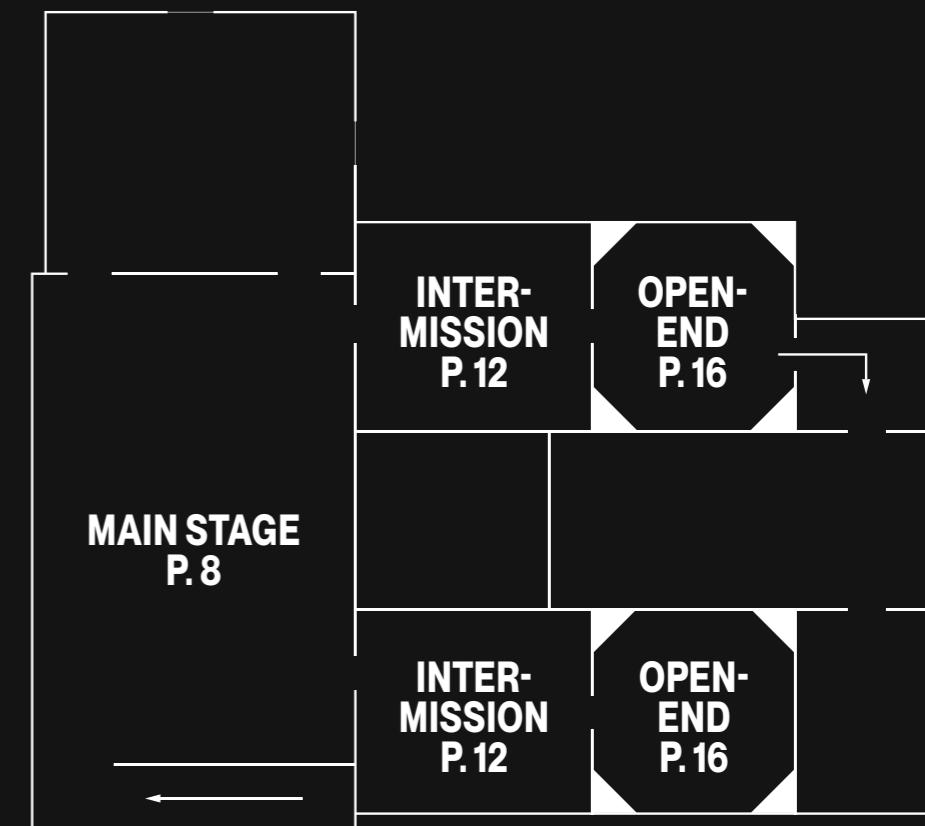
**Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt**'s (\*1932, Wurzen) oeuvre includes paintings, drawings and, above all, typewriter graphics created from 1972 to 1989, which show a kinship to visual and concrete poetry. In part, the typewriter works were also expanded into collages. The artist actively participated in international mail art, through which she built up an extensive network. It could happen that Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt asked her correspondence partners to process the graphics themselves and send them back. Under the impression of the Cold War, she also incorporated political content into her works (Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt was committed to the peace movement). Although her typewritings are more than 30 years old, they are of extraordinary relevance and topicality. They address global communication, the value of information, and their medium itself: Typewriter and paper. In 2022, Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt was honored with the Hannah Höch Prize of the Berlin Senate's Cultural Administration. She has lived in Berlin for over 70 years.

# MANUAL

## GROUND FLOOR



## UPPER FLOOR



# AUDITIONS FOR AN UNWRITTEN OPERA AROUND THE WORKS BY MUTLU ÇERKEZ

ON VIEW JULY 14 – OCTOBER 8, 2023

MUTLU ÇERKEZ WITH ANTONIA BAEHR,  
JULIET CARPENTER, JESSE DARLING, JULIAN DASHPER,  
EGEMEN DEMIRCI, PEDRO GÓMEZ-EGAÑA, LÉULI  
ESHRĀGHI, MARCO FUSINATO, DELIA GONZALEZ,  
ÖZLEM GÜNYOL & MUSTAFA KUNT, ON KAWARA,  
HANNE LIPPARD, CALLUM MORTON, SERKAN ÖZKAYA,  
RUTH WOLF-REHFELDT, JEFF WALL PRODUCTION,  
AND FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES

CURATED BY MISAL ADNAN YILDIZ

## EXHIBITION

Curator: Misal Adnan Yıldız

Production assistance: Arhun Aksakal

Production and installation: Prisma Fine Art Services, Robert Steng, Werner Becker, Erdal Taşar, Silke Stock and Susanne Kocks

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Opening hours:  
Tue–Sun 10–6pm, Fridays free admission

9th TarraWarra Australian Art Biennale 2023 and are Curatorial Researcher in Residence at the University of Queensland Art Museum, Australia.

**Marco Fusinato** (\*1964, Melbourne, Australia) is a contemporary artist and noise musician whose work takes the form of installation, photographic reproduction, design, performance, and recordings. As an artist, he conceives his work as a succession of interrelated projects, some of which continue across numerous iterations. Working across disciplines and cultural fields, Fusinato explores the tensions and contradictions of opposing forces: underground culture/institutions, noise/silence, minimalism/maximalism, and purity/contamination. As a musician, Fusinato explores the idea of noise as music, using the electric guitar and mass amplification to improvise intricate, wide-ranging, and physically affecting frequencies. His ongoing series of durational noise guitar performances, *Spectral Arrows*—described as a monumental aural sculpture—was first performed at the Glasgow International arts festival in 2012 and has since been performed in museums and theaters worldwide.

**Pedro Gómez-Egaña** (\*1976, Colombia) is concerned with exploring ways in which technology shapes and informs culture, particularly our understanding of time. Whether by reproducing ancient machines or exploring the experience of virtual realities, the artist follows an interest in how our relationship to tools and devices, and the cultures of time that emerge surrounding them, is a fundamental domain of analysis and exploration. Gómez-Egaña has developed a variety of research projects at different institutions and with partners such as the Oslo National Academy of the Arts; Goldsmiths College, London; Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo; The Laban Centre, London; and Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

**Delia Gonzalez** (\*1972 Miami, USA) is a composer, choreographer, musician and performance artist with US and Cuban roots who works across disciplines. Her media range from film, music, and choreography to dance, performance, sculpture, drawing, and painting. Delia Gonzalez's beginnings are in performance, theater and dance and continue to inform her artistic approach. She is an acclaimed musician (she has collaborated with DFA Records since 2003) and often combines her music with film - shot exclusively on 16mm. Delia Gonzalez's significant productions include a piano score with four ballet movements (*In Remembrance*, 2015, DFA) and an electronic album combined with a dance film in three acts (*Horse Follows Darkness*, 2017, DFA Records). Delia Gonzalez lived in Berlin for

ten years before moving back to her old home in New York for a short time in 2014. Delia Gonzalez now lives in Athens.

**Felix Gonzalez-Torres** (\*1957, La Habana, Cuba–1996, Miami, USA) was a Cuban-born American visual artist. He lived and worked primarily in New York City between 1979 and 1995 after attending university in Puerto Rico. Gonzalez-Torres's practice incorporates a minimalist visual vocabulary, with certain artworks composed of everyday materials, such as strings of lightbulbs, paired wall clocks, stacks of paper, and individually wrapped candies. Gonzalez-Torres is known for having made significant contributions to the field of conceptual art in the 1980s and 1990s. His practice continues to influence and be influenced by present-day cultural discourses. Gonzalez-Torres died in 1996 from AIDS-related illness.

**Özlem Günyol & Mustafa Kunt** (\*1977, 1978, Ankara, Turkey) The artist couple Özlem Günyol and Mustafa Kunt studied at the Hacettepe Üniversitesi in Ankara and at the Städelschule in Frankfurt. Özlem Günyol was a master student of Prof. Ayşe Erkmen, Mustafa Kunt of Prof. Wolfgang Tillmans. They have been working as a duo since 2007. The work of Özlem Günyol and Mustafa Kunt is very heterogeneous; it includes installations, objects, photography, print and video elements. They investigate the meaning of language and symbols in the context of discourses around power and authority. In doing so, they question social and political systems as well as constructions of identity. The investigation of social and cultural conditions shapes their artistic practice, which is conceptual and always related to space and place. The themes of their works are political and historical. Özlem Günyol and Mustafa Kunt have already received several awards, including the 2017 HAP Grieshaber Prize from VG Bild-Kunst/Stiftung Kunstfonds. They have received numerous international awards and grants, for example in New York (Künstlerhaus Schloss Balmoral New York-Grant, 2011). They have lived in Frankfurt am Main since 2001.

**Jeff Wall Production** is the production label initiated by Pierre Bal-Blanc, which takes its title from his first project dedicated to the artist Jeff Wall in 1988. The subject of this seminal project has since become the trademark of the following works. Bal-Blanc is an independent curator and essayist based in Athens and Paris. Born in a working-class environment in Ugine, Savoie, France, his destiny changed at the age of 17 following his meeting with Johan van der Keuken with whom he co-directed *Le Résistant* (1983), a collective short film in Annecy coordinated by Thierry Nouvel. In 1988, he founded

## BIOGRAPHIES

**Mutlu Çerkez** (\*1964, London, England–2005, Melbourne, Australia)

Born in London in 1964 to Turkish-Cypriot parents, Mutlu Çerkez completed his studies at the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, in 1987. He held his first solo exhibitions the next year, at City Gallery, Melbourne, and the Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney. He has exhibited regularly in major group and solo shows since. Çerkez quickly attracted an international reputation, showing in the US, Italy, and Denmark, as well as at the 1998 São Paulo Biennale and 1999 Istanbul Biennial. In the same year, he was part of the Seppelt Contemporary Art Award. Çerkez died in 2005.

### Participating artists

**Antonia Baehr** (\*1970, Berlin, Germany) is a choreographer, performer, filmmaker, and visual artist. Her works explore the fiction of the everyday and of the theatre, among other themes. She works with various partners, frequently in the form of switching roles: from project to project, each artist alternately takes on the role of either guest or host. Baehr studied film and media arts at the Hochschule der Künste, Berlin, with Valie Export (1996) and obtained a DAAD grant and a Merit Scholarship to attend the School of The Art Institute of Chicago.

**Juliet Carpenter** is a filmmaker from New Zealand, currently living and working in Frankfurt am Main. Carpenter gained her BFA from the Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland, New Zealand in 2013, and since 2018 has been a student in the film class at Städelschule Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste currently led by Gerard Byrne. Her practice often foregrounds sexual and emotional experiences and amplifies qualities of narratives considered hysterical or disturbed. Her work is interested in the ways in which individuals produce themselves as characters, especially through contemporary image technology.

**Jesse Darling** (\*1981, Oxford, UK) started art school as they were turning 30. After graduating from Central Saint Martins and Slade School of Fine Art in London, they made a name for themselves from within the media-structured and media-hungry art world of the early 2010s. Their sculptures, dra-

wings, and objects reflect the vulnerability of the human body and express the desire to resist the constraints imposed on our lives by social and political forces. Through video, social media, poetry, essays, and lectures, they endeavored to carve out a space for intimacy and plurality from within a corporate ecology offering little or no hope for radical alternatives: IKEA and Batman provided themes for some of their early shows.

**Julian Dashper** (\*1960–2009, Auckland, New Zealand), is regarded as one of New Zealand's most well-known contemporary artists. In his work, he focused on histories, theories, and more general or popular ideas of abstraction (particularly abstract painting), as well as conceptualism and minimalism as a working methodology. Dashper brokered a shift from mid-century regionalist painters who were interested in nationalist artistic themes to a group of younger artists who embraced different media and modalities, but also pursued the discourses of a globalized art world.

**Egemen Demirci** (\*1983, Izmir, Turkey) works with a range of media including installation, drawing, text, and video. In his work, he investigates the conceptual boundaries of abstraction, space, and exhibition-making practices. His practice embodies a critical approach to the notion of reality in contemporary information production and our algorithm-centric world and employs theoretical analysis in order to form new relationships between subject, object, and information. Demirci received his BA in Visual Arts program at Sabancı University, Istanbul (2005) and his MFA in the "Public Art and New Artistic Strategies" program at Bauhaus University in Weimar, Germany (2009). During 2014–2015, he took part as a researcher/artist at the Jan van Eyck Academie Residency program in Maastricht, Netherlands. Demirci is based in Berlin, Germany.

**Léuli Eshraghi** is a researcher, curator, and artist living and working between Meanjin/Brisbane, Australia and Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal, Canada. Of Chinese, Samoan, and Persian heritage, among others, Eshraghi focuses on embodied knowledge, ceremonial and political practices, linguistic renewal, and indigenous futurisms in the Great Ocean (Pacific Ocean basin) and beyond. Their projects include residencies, exhibitions, publications, teaching, and advocacy. They are curator of the

## WHAT IS THIS EXHIBITION ABOUT?

Borrowing its title from a key piece by the British-born, Australian-Turkish Cypriot artist **Mutlu Çerkez** (1964–2005), this exhibition is inspired by the uniqueness of his approach to titling. Often giving his works, not a standard title, but one based on a future date upon which they would be remade, he proposed for them a new form of life, veering conceptually from their momentary narration, production, or materiality.

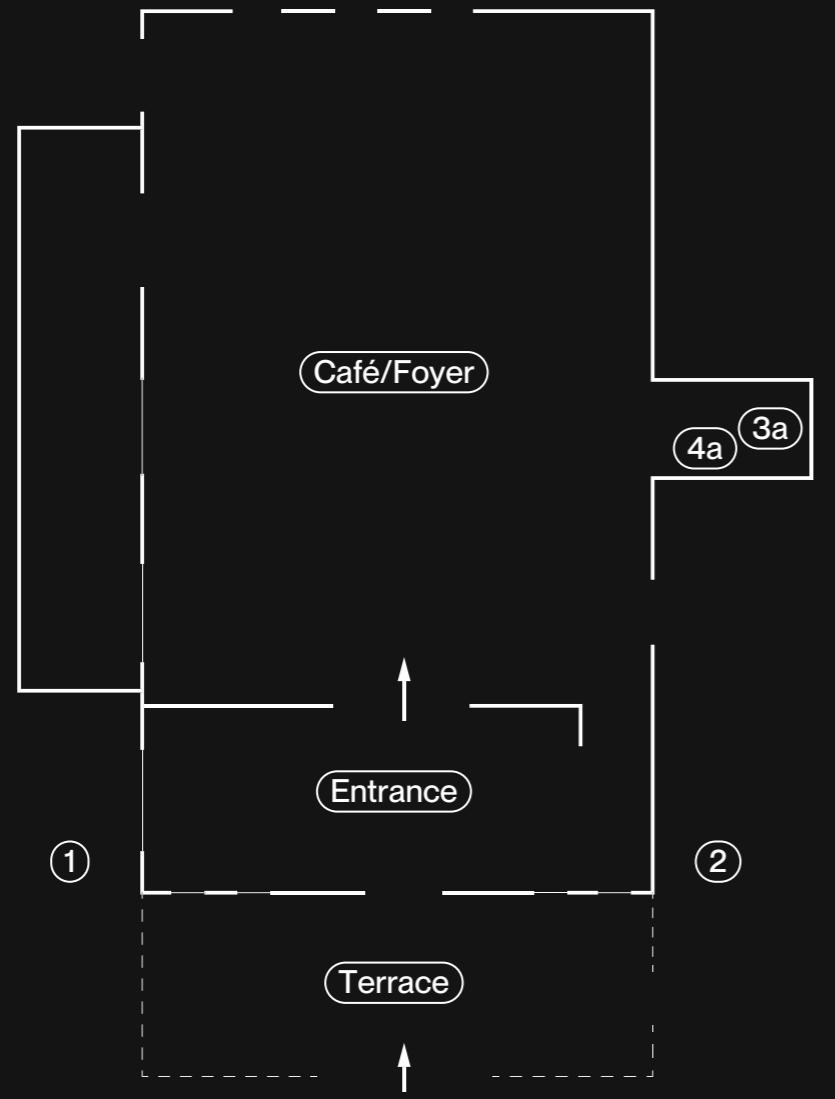
Çerkez is an excellent protagonist to create a room for reflection, collective studio practice, and expanded stage to question our relationships with the future; our connections with the present art canon, and our position in relation to those missing chapters of art history. This exhibition is not only about the legacy of an early loss, but an emphasis on rehearsal, work in progress, daily practice, and exercise without final results, conclusions, renders, or destinations.

Works by Çerkez are recalled to investigate the ways in which:

- the life of an artist reflects on the exhibition history of an institution;
- the development of a work and how it is made interacts with future generations;
- the currency of conceptual thinking with its soundness, relevancy, and contemporaneity is still valid.

Connecting the exhibition space to emotional intelligence, the collective unconscious, and conceptual thinking, this exhibition becomes a mental space between joy and grief. We live in times when spaces for grief have been reduced to moments of interaction on social media. The politics of desire and technologies of pleasure are shifting our economy of attention to screen-navigated zones and self-centered stimulation. However, this cannot replace the true meaning of shared joy.

# PROLOGUE



- ① Mutlu Çerkez, *Confide in me*, 1994

Video, color  
1 minute 42 seconds  
Courtesy of Griffith University Art Museum Collection,  
Brisbane

- ② Julian Dashper, *Studio Songs*, 1998

VHS transfer to digital file  
37 minutes  
Courtesy of the Julian Dashper estate and Michael Lett  
Gallery, Auckland

- ③a Delia Gonzalez, *In Remembrance*, 2015

HD-Video, 5 min 23 sec  
Courtesy of Hot Wheels Athens

- ④a Pedro Gómez-Egaña, *The Writer Draughtsman's Chat*,  
2019

Drawing

on a Lacanian point of reference: “That which is light looks at me, and by means of that light in the depths of my eye, something is painted; something that is an impression, the shimmering of a surface that is not, in advance, situated for me in its distance. This is something with all its ambiguity and variability, which is in no way mastered by me. It is rather it that grasps me, solicits me at every moment, and makes the landscape something other than a landscape, something other than what I have called a picture.”

#### BLACK and WHITE

Juliet Carpenter

A new film by **Juliet Carpenter**—an artist shortlisted for the Walters Prize 2024—in collaboration with Róisín Berg, *The Sun Is Not to Be Believed* (2023) (25) is presented within a site-specific installation designed by the artist. Carpenter proposes the audience look at the filmic skylights in the exhibition space, intending for them to connect us with nature, time, and notions of existence. Her film is in black and white; light and shadow play crucial roles in transitions between a garden, a naked female body, tools used for gardening, birds, flora, and hands. Her powerful abstract language brings a unique way for us to connect with antipodean perception of time, the synchronization of living forms, and notions of movement in filmmaking. Her work crystallizes the dramatic power of the movie camera on our lives: creating the actors as subjects in the ongoing re-negotiation of rehearsals and performances of identity and collective memory.

#### The Last Question

Pedro Gómez-Egaña

The title for **Pedro Gómez-Egaña**'s work (2023) (26) comes from a short story by science fiction writer Isaac Asimov, *The Last Question* (1956). Asimov extrapolated the trend towards centralization that characterized computation technology planning in the 1950s towards an ultimate centrally-managed global computer. At the center of a dark room lit by a candle with a soft halo of light, such as in Caravaggio paintings, a metal structure with wooden boxes stands up, like a mysterious puzzle. These forms can be opened and closed, allowing the sound from the small speakers inside to be modulated. The instrument is balanced on a metal rod that stands on a circular concrete base. On top, there is a mechanism that ensures a candle that remains upright regardless of the orientation of the instrument. The artist operates the doors of the boxes, changing the volume and resonance of tones and looped instrumental phrases. Viewers are free to enter and leave the performance space at any time. The musical passages were inspired by Johannes Kepler's early 1600s *Harmonices Mundi*, theoretical propositions that claim the cosmos corresponds with certain musical tonalities, as well as the voice of the artist's mother, harmonized so that only the overtones in her speech are audible.

# PROLOGUE

## MUTLU ÇERKEZ, JULIAN DASHPER, DELIA GONZALEZ

The exhibition offers three film works before entering the exhibition floor as part of the prologue, or an overture. Two antipodean positions, **Mutlu Çerkez** and **Julian Dashper**, welcome the audience with moving images on both sides of the entrance.

The one minute and forty two second-long *Confide in Me* (1994) (1) by Çerkez has an archival value: it was originally broadcast on TV in January 1995; as a one-take a shot, it captures a man's torso (the artist's) who is playing an acoustic rendition of Kylie Minogue's popular song “Confide in Me” on the guitar with no vocals.

Julian Dashper's *Studio Songs* (1998) (2) is born out of the performances by the artist himself and his artist friends, who are also musicians: two guitarists, a drummer, and a vocalist. Dashper considers these recordings authorized by artists, rather than by musicians. In this video, taken on Mother's Day, the tenth of May, 1998, Dashper, Simon Cuming, Clinton Watkins, Justin Roys, and Miranda Harcourt were sharing the studio. It is edited from three hours of footage in total, which spans the creation of ten 7" records—a series of unique variants resulting from the artist's Auckland “shared space” becoming a recording studio.

*In Remembrance* (2013) (3a) by **Delia Gonzalez** is a 16mm ballet dance film, accompanied by the music composed by the artist herself. In her words, “The film is meant to re-create the fleeting sensation of inspiration—that sacred feeling when suddenly your mind clears and you know exactly what you’re meant to create and become.” The original piano score was initially inspired by a text by Henry Miller as well as a theory by spiritual teacher George Gurdjieff, which states that “to play scales is to become more in tune with your inner self.”

The video room next to the ticket desk presents this film with a drawing by **Pedro Gómez-Egaña**, *The Writer Draughtsman's Chat*, 2019, (4a). These handwritten words allude the random, shallow, and machinery aspects of the dating language of the Internet. It seems to be an allegory for a prologue, which never evolves into a real story.

(1)

(2)

(3a)

(4a)

## MAIN STAGE

- 
- (3b) Delia Gonzalez, *Replicas*, 2022  
Graphite on paper, acrylic paint, watercolor pencil, gold leaf, 75 × 75 cm  
Courtesy of Hot Wheels Athens
- (4b) Pedro Gómez-Egaña, *IMPLICA, Composition for Cymbals*, 2003–2023
- (5) Antonia Baehr, *Could You Please Laugh Like Nicole Dembélé? – Chorus 1*, 2012  
HD-Video, 3 minutes 39 seconds  
Courtesy of Antonia Baehr
- Antonia Baehr, *Scores*, 2008  
29,7 × 21 cm (framed)  
Courtesy of Antonia Baehr  
by: Christian Kesten, William Wheeler & Nicole Dembélé, Henry Wilt, Steffi Weissman und Andrea Neumann
- (6) Mutlu Çerkez, *Untitled: 17 September 2065*, 1990  
Printed calendars on paper mounted on Masonite, and oil on canvas, 112 panels, each 14,6 × 11,2 cm, 1 panel 50,5 × 50,5 cm  
Courtesy of Monash University Museum of Art | MUMA, Melbourne
- (7) Mutlu Çerkez and Marco Fusinato, *AND*, 2003  
dimensions: wall specific  
Courtesy of Mutlu Çerkez - Marco Fusinato
- (8) Felix Gonzalez-Torres, "Untitled" (*Portrait of the Magoons*), 1993  
Paint on wall  
Dimensions vary with installation  
Courtesy of the Private Collection
- (9) Marco Fusinato, *Mass Black Implosion (Ludwig van, Mauricio Kagel)*, 2017, 1–10  
Ink on archival facsimile of score  
each 79,2 × 102,7 cm (framed), 10 parts  
Courtesy of PALAS, Australia, and Marco Fusinato
- (10) Mutlu Çerkez, *hi i thought... (29 November 2021)* from the series *Various responses*, 2004  
synthetic polymer paint on paper  
108 × 82,5 cm (framed)  
Courtesy of Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne
- (11) Julian Dashper, *Einladungskarte Teststrip*, 1996
- (12) Mutlu Çerkez, *Untitled: 14 July 2030*, from the series *Stage furniture / props for an unwritten opera*, 1999  
Marshall 1959 SLP amplifier, Marshall 1960 AX amplifier, Marshall 1960 BX amplifier, approx. 197 × 76 × 36 cm overall  
Courtesy of Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne
- (13) Mutlu Çerkez, *A design for the overture curtain of an Unwritten Opera, Untitled: 15 January 2028*, from the series *A design for the overture curtain of an unwritten opera*, 1999  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas  
402 × 592 cm  
Courtesy of Monash University Museum of Art | MUMA, Melbourne, and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne
- (14) Egemen Demirci, *Spectator on White*, 2012/2023  
Video, 8 minutes  
Courtesy of Egemen Demirci and Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden

## OPEN-END: FURTHER DESTINATIONS

Çerkez's oeuvre guided the research and the exhibition process, appearing alongside works from a new wave of queer, critical, and radical practices that pose questions about acts of rehearsal, the state of works in progress, and an artist's life as a biography of transition. The exhibition's subtitle proposes "around" instead of an expression such as "about." "Around" refers to circling, gathering, and staying together.

### DUO

Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt und Hanne Lippard

Within the exhibition, a room is dedicated to a conceptual dialogue between two Berlin-based artists, **Hanne Lippard**, winner of the Preis der Nationalgalerie 2024, and **Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt**, winner of Hannah Höch Prize in 2022. Wolf-Rehfeldt's geometric, typographic, and poetic forms come from typewriter graphics—or "typewritings" as she calls them—refer to a specific period, the Cold War era between 1970–1990. The series selected for this show brings everyday poetry, political vocabulary, environmental questions, and issues in human values and women's rights (21). Alongside her is Hanne Lippard, the poet and artist from Berlin who is devoted to the linguistic spaces we share, and the perception, reception, and transformation of language. Her earlier work *Mistakes Made* (2016) (22) returns within this exhibition with a new German translation and also with a necessity of poetry and confessional writing in our common spaces of intimacy, dialogue, consensus, and negotiation.

### TRIO

Mutlu Çerkez, Marco Fusinato, Callum Morton

The moving image work *Avalon* (2005) (23)—a collaboration between friends **Mutlu Çerkez**, **Callum Morton**, and **Marco Fusinato**—was commissioned by Nicholas Tsoutas, then director of Artspace, Sydney, where the film premiered in a 2005 exhibition titled *Avalon: Marco Fusinato, Callum Morton & Mutlu Çerkez*. It captures the three artists in a quarry in the Melbourne suburb of Avalon (famous for its airport, but also the name of an enchanted island in Arthurian legend) throwing small rocks at the lens of a 35mm film camera, which is protected by a Perspex shield.

### ANATOMY

Serkan Özka

Like Mutlu Çerkez, **Serkan Özka** also deals with copy, reproduction, and representation across many different forms of materiality. This site-specific work *ni4ni v.4* (2022) (24) rendered, adapted, and produced for the Kunsthalle's exhibition space connects the human anatomy with the art institution, moreover through such an exaggerated gesture—blowing up an eye to the scale of a body—it becomes an uncanny space, an open scenography, and a mesmerizing encounter with its potential audiences. Following New York and Istanbul iterations, Özka presents the Baden-Baden version of the work, insisting

## OPEN-END



(21) Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt  
*Wellen Natur*, late 1970s  
 15 × 20 cm (5 7/8 × 7 7/8 inches)

*Weit Fliegen Wehen (Words Waves)*, 1974  
 Original typewriting  
 29.5 × 21 cm (11 5/8 × 8 1/4 inches)

*Inflation*, mid 1970s  
 Original typewriting  
 10.5 × 12 cm (4 1/8 × 4 3/4 inches)

*Vergangen collagiert*, 1980s  
 Collage on zincography  
 20 × 15 cm (7 7/8 × 5 7/8 inches)

*Undeterminated sum*, late 1980s  
 Original typewriting  
 15 × 10.5 cm (5 7/8 × 4 1/8 inches)  
 32 × 27.7 cm (12 5/8 × 10 7/8 inches) (framed)

*From dust to dust (diptych)*, 1975  
 20.9 × 14.7 cm (8 1/4 × 5 3/4 inches),  
 38.4 × 32.2 cm (15 1/8 × 12 5/8 inches) (framed)

*Kuben, Kästen, Käfige*, 1979  
 Original typewriting and carbon copies  
 three elements each: 29.5 × 21 cm (11 5/8 × 8 1/4 inches),  
 43 × 83 cm (16 7/8 × 32 5/8 inches) (framed)

*Grundblatt der Serie "Faltung"*, 1980s  
 Original typewriting and carbon copy of typewriting two  
 elements, each: 29.5 × 21 cm (11 5/8 × 8 1/4 inches)  
 framed: 48 × 61 cm (18 7/8 × 24 inches)

*Wörter series*, mid 1970s  
 Original typewriting, 10.5 × 15 cm (4 1/8 × 5 7/8 inches),  
 27.7 × 32 cm (10 7/8 × 12 5/8 inches) (framed)

*A And Able (Words Waves)*, 1974  
 Carbon copy of original typewriting, 29.5 × 21 cm (11 5/8  
 × 8 1/4 inches), 47.5 × 38 × 4 cm (18 3/4 × 15 × 15/8  
 inches) (framed)  
 All works Courtesy of ChertLüdde, Berlin

(22) Hanne Lippard, *Mistakes Made*, 2016  
 4 minutes 05 seconds  
 single channel 1 speaker system 360°  
 Courtesy of Hanne Lippard

(23) Mutlu Çerkez, Marco Fusinato and Callum  
 Morton, *Avalon*, 2005

35mm film, colour, transferred to DVD, 5.1, Dolby sound,  
 4 minutes 4 seconds, looped, edition of 5  
 Courtesy of Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne

(24) Serkan Özkaya, *ni4ni v.4*, 2022  
 fabric and vinyl, 360 degree mirror surface reflecting,  
 Site specific spatial installation  
 Courtesy of Serkan Özkaya

(25) Juliet Carpenter and Róisín Berg,  
*The Sun Is Not To Be Believed*, 2023

HD video and recurrent editing algorithm  
 28 minutes, 29 seconds  
 Performer: Erdmutter Pumin  
 Costume Design: Luka Mues  
 Courtesy of Juliet Carpenter and Staatliche Kunsthalle  
 Baden-Baden

(26) Pedro Gómez-Egaña, *The Last Question*, 2023  
 Site specific installation  
 ca 165 cm (h) x ca. 150 cm (w); Base: Ø 2 m  
 Courtesy of Zilberman Gallery, Berlin/Istanbul, and  
 Pedro Gómez-Egaña

## MAIN STAGE

### AROUND THE CURTAIN

MUTLU ÇERKEZ, MARCO FUSINATO, ANTONIA BAEHR,  
 EGEMEN DEMIRCI, DELIA GONZALEZ, JULIAN DASHPER,  
 MATTER OF, AND FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES

When ascending the stairs to the exhibition space, one finds two graphic works made of vinyl applications. The first is the key visual design element that **Matter Of** developed for the exhibition in reference to Çerkez's typographical works, *26980 30 JULY 2038* and *26980 30 JULY 2038*, both made in 1994.

(4b)

Secondly, **Pedro Gómez-Egaña's** *Implica* (2003-2023) (4b) revisits a composition from his past as a musician, and remakes it via a drawing as an artist, reflecting on pivotal points in the last two decades of the artist's life.

Like other scores in the show, from **Antonia Baehr** to **Marco Fusinato**, they are open to the public waiting to be performed, revisited, or activated.

Baehr's body of work *Rire, Ridere, Laugh, Lachen* talks about human nature, and specifically the act of laughing. With scores made by friends imitating the artist's laughter, Baehr explores this expression as a sovereign entity, separate from causal baggage such as jokes, tickles, narrative, humor, or joy, instead looking at the thing itself: the sound and shape, the music, choreography and drama, the rhythm and the gesture of laughing. *Laugh* is a piece about laughing as laughing.

(5)

Baehr's video work reframes the question *Could You Please Laugh Like Nicole Dembélé?* (2012) (5) from the workshops at an artist residency near Paris. She recruited "good male and female laughers" ("bons rieurs et rieuses") with a newspaper ad. Twenty-five people attended the workshops. The participants were filmed by Dr. Rire (aka the artist Pauline Curnier Jardin) while laughing.

(13)

As its stepping stones, this exhibition starts from selected works by Mutlu Çerkez who continually inquired about one specific form: an unwritten opera as a conceptual piece. Historically speaking, the artist dedicated almost a decade to inquiries in the form of a series of props and makeup design studies to his Unwritten Opera between 1992 and 2000 and investigated variations of album covers for bootleg recordings of Led Zeppelin.

Çerkez continued practicing the Unwritten Opera by extending its forms and materiality to a painting surface, or the Marshall guitar amp favored by Jimmy Page. As a conversation piece, the leading work *A Design for the Overture Curtain of an Unwritten Opera, Untitled: 15 January 2028* (1999) (13)—also shown as part of the 6th Istanbul Biennial, Turkey (1999)—is positioned as a key reference for the dramaturgy and choreography of the exhibition, considering the narrative politics and gestures of movement and direction in the show.

14

**Egemen Demirci**, who worked with the Kunsthalle Baden-Baden for two years as a so-called “Hauskünstler” (artist at work), a temporary position to engage artists with paid hours into the institutional framework, revisits his work from 2012, *Spectator on White* 14. In the video work, spectators go through imaginary artworks recalled from memory, invisible to the viewer of the video. The remake of the existing work in 2023 within the neoclassical architecture of the Kunsthalle as a state-run art institution, in a heritage building and in the city of Festspiele, Kurhaus, Friedrichsbud, and others, establishes a potent relationship with Çerkez’s Unwritten Opera, maybe even as the missing libretto.

After discussions with Çerkez’s close collaborators, revisiting his artist texts and personal statements about the status of art, and also in collaboration with curators, conservators, and museums, this show proposes a display form, which embodies the 1999 and 2000 experiments by the artist as well as impossible and imaginative conversation with the artist through going back to the nature of a curtain, moving back and forth.

7

**AND** (2003–2023) 7, the first in a series of works made in collaboration with Çerkez’s artist friends, is back as a site-specific wall remade and located—again—in between selected pieces by the artist and **Marco Fusinato** for this exhibition. It was firstly made for an exhibition at Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces in Melbourne, and Fusinato adapted the piece to the Kunsthalle architecture after revisiting the original sketches left from the time.

9

Fusinato’s selected scores from the *Mass Black Implosion* (2017) 9 series refer and tribute to the avant-garde composers and are reproduced at 1:1 scale. Fusinato codes it clearly as: “a line is ruled from every original note to an arbitrarily chosen point as a proposition for a new composition, in which every note is played at once, as a moment of consolidation and singular impact.” Ten drawings take up the film *Ludwig Van* by Mauricio Kagel, that is based on the bicentennial celebrations of the birth of Ludwig van Beethoven in 1970.

11

The works selected for Kunsthalle’s main exhibition hall consider the space as the main stage in the context of performative arts, and “the curatorial” proposes a conceptual gesture of relocating the curtain three times in relation to the public programming, titled according to an antipodean common blessing “High Tides, Good Vibes, Blue Skies.” This constellation includes text-based works by **Mutlu Çerkez** and **Pedro Gómez-Egaña**, as well as **Julian Dashper**’s invitation card 11, (1996) for an exhibition at the artist-run space *Teststrip*, Auckland, dated 1996—a significant statement for the reception, and deception of art. As well, it includes *Replicas* by **Delia Gonzalez** (2022) 3b, made of graphite on paper, acrylic paint, watercolor pencil, and gold leaf, which operates as an abstract space for rethinking the idea of stage and staging.

3b

With regard to the tradition of portraiture in art history, **Felix Gonzalez-Torres**’s portrait works create fragile, passionate, vivid, transformative, and reflective relationships between the individual person, and the time we live in, we share; especially the zeitgeist. This is the only body of work in his oeuvre that is collaborative. And while the initial versions of portrait works were made with Gonzalez-Torres’s engagement, these works have the capacity to continue to change over time. “Untitled” (*Portrait of the Magoons*) from 1993 8 is composed of short textual entries and dates directly applied on the wall in horizontal lines and at the height of the ornamental frames, which defines the exhibition space as the heritage building.

8

Jesse Darling continually explores the limits, transitions, and transformation of bodies via complex relationships between human beings, institutional settings, and organic forms. Being a free individual is the subject of many works Darling has conceptualized. For this exhibition, the artist presents a pair of transparent vitrines filled with remains of works by American artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres that were recovered from various exhibitions. (*Reliquary (for and after Felix Gonzalez-Torres, in loving memory, 2022)*)

(28)

## INTERMISSION

- (15) Mutlu Çerkez, *Plate 11, Untitled 13145 (12 September 2000)*, 1990  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas board  
22.5 × 30 cm  
Courtesy of Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne
- (16) Mutlu Çerkez, *Plate 12, Untitled 13202 (8 November 2000)*, 1990  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas board  
22.5 × 30 cm  
Courtesy of Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne
- (17) Özlem Günyol & Mustafa Kunt, *...AND JUSTICE FOR ALL!*, 2010  
sculpture, acrylic spray color on cotton cloth, 2200 cm  
Courtesy of Özlem Günyol & Mustafa Kunt
- (18) Léuli Eshraghi, *Afiaf left - afiaf right*, 2023  
two channel video  
Courtesy of Léuli Eshraghi
- (19) Léuli Eshraghi, *Afiaf Poem*, 2023  
Vinyl Print - yellow wall with red poetry text, site specific  
Courtesy of Léuli Eshraghi
- (20) Mutlu Çerkez, *Untitled: 14 November 2009*, 2003  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas board,  
28 panels, each 35.5 × 25 cm  
Courtesy of Anna Schwartz Gallery Melbourne



## INTERMISSION: REINCARNATIONS

Selected works from **On Kawara**, **Mutlu Çerkez**, artist duo **Özlem Günyol & Mustafa Kunt**, **Léuli Eshraghi**, and **Jesse Darling** unite to change the narrative politics on genealogy, ancestral connections and community consciousness, as well as singular and plural forms of resistance and resilience with references to duality, reproduction, and rehearsal.

There is hardly any other artistic position than **On Kawara's** (27a/b) with which to consider Mutlu Çerkez's gestures, index, and system of dating his works into the future:

Beginning on January 4, 1966, Kawara created a continuous series of paintings (the Today series) that consisted pictorially solely of the date on which the painting was executed in simple white lettering on a monochrome background. For Kawara, this was testimony to the passing of time, its witness and mediation.

*I GOT UP*, 2021, by **Jeff Wall Production** (30), the production label of curator and writer Pierre Bal Blanc, references On Kawara's equally conceptual and time-based series */ Got Up*, part of an ongoing body of work that Kawara produced between 1968–1979. Each day, the artist sent a postcard to two different friends or colleagues, each with the exact time of rising and the addresses of sender and recipient. With *I GOT UP*, Bal Blanc referred to this method and invited visitors to the gallery in Athens at the times indicated on the postcards Kawara exhibited there. Each time, Bal Blanc himself or his collaborators, such as Hugo Wheeler, woke up in the gallery.

Two works by **Özlem Günyol & Mustafa Kunt**, both almost a decade old, are revisited on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Gezi Park Protests. Their associations with transformation of public space are inspiring for understanding the 2000s as opposed to the 1990s zeitgeist, such as the mutation of street language—before the Internet, or the singularity of a political subject, which come together with the works by Çerkez as extended poesie. A 22-meter-long banner used at a demonstration that reads "...AND JUSTICE FOR ALL!" has been transformed into a rope, which ties objects, cuts off the breath or is used to drown people in the tradition of Ottoman history of the dynasty (17). For the video work, the artist duo collaborated with a dancer (Sezen Tonguz), inviting her to compose and perform with visual reference to the actual demonstrations (29).

As a co-commission by Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden Baden, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tallawoladah/Sydney, the Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, nipaluna/Hobart, and Aupuni Space, Honolulu, **Léuli Eshraghi** presents their new dual channel video work, *afiafi*. As the fourth work in Eshraghi's ongoing series *Siapo viliata o le atumotu* (2020–), *afiafi* (18/19), is titled by the Samoan word which means day, afternoon, evening, and fire in Sāmoan, symbolizing lifecycles, pleasure, and renewal. Social interactions with queer Indigenous kin are central to the work. The double-channel video narrates Eshraghi and their collaborators in ceremonial settings with blessings, celebrations, and other connections with their roots and as a real-time activation, it regenerates various rituals of Indigenous storytelling with images in the present.