

DIENSTGEBÄUDE Art Space Zürich
September 3 – October 1, 2016
Opening: Friday, September 2, 7 – 11 pm

JocJonJosch / Tom Huber / Artemis Potamianou

PSI

JocJonJosch: The Long Way Round

I long to be digging, digging over, as they say here.
—Samuel Beckett, letter to Georges Duthuit, January 1951

Circles often figure in JocJonJosch's practice. They form the basis of the three artists' thinking, of the imaginary voyages their sculptures invoke, and of the processes the artists endure in order to make, and then very often unmake, their work.

The collective's digging exercises are in this respect emblematic. **Dig Shovel Dig, Ardez**, which took place in 2013 in Ardez, Switzerland, involved each of the three artists digging a hole only to fill the hole of another. The recorded performance explores what it means to work together; to collaborate. It also explores the body and its limits. To watch the three artists labour is to watch bodies under some duress, bodies whose comically futile movements are determined by the logic of the circle.

Dig Shovel Dig was repeated in 2014 in Aldeburgh, a coastal town in the English county of Suffolk. The process was the same, except that in this instance, aside from a video of the performance, there is also a black and white photograph of three spades sticking out of a mound of earth. There is an unexpected sense of mournfulness to the image, one that contrasts to the previous video projection, which is more absurd. It is difficult to account for this feeling, but it may have something to do with the associations of digging: that of a buried past, perhaps, which refuses to be uncovered, or a longing for closure.

JocJonJosch's third digging work, **Ditch and Rampart**, took place in Fiesch, Switzerland, in 2015, and takes these exercises in another direction. What remains here is a photograph of a circle cut into the earth, a kind of scar or trace, recalling the land art of Richard Long or Robert Smithson. In another digging work, made in Brig in 2016, the spectator is left with a black and white photograph of a hole and mound of equal proportions, which both affirm and negate each other. And for another digging work, which took place in Martigny, also in 2016, JocJonJosch made a totem using the traditional rammed earth technique. Earth was dug up and mixed with hay and water. The mixture was then placed inside round buckets which were pressed down with feet and left to dry. The totem was constructed out of the resulting bricks and, though gradually decaying, still stands. But for the viewer the large-scale Photograph of a Totem is the only trace of the artists' labour. In this respect the work is reminiscent of JocJonJosch's larger performance works, which often employ the naked bodies of performers to form temporary structures, and where the only visual evidence left behind are photographs of the now empty spaces in which the performances took place.

A similar logic underlies two portraits that constitute a new trajectory in JocJonJosch's artistic practice. To make the portraits, each of the three members of the collective drew another member. The rules of the game did not allow for the artists to look at each other when drawing and each line had to be continuous, ending where it began. The process of making was embodied and emphatically material, each artist forced to hover over the page because of its scale, to make large sweeps with one arm and to support his body with the other. In one drawing, titled **JocJonJosch Self-Portrait**, 4th May 2016, each artist drew another artist. In the other drawing this process was repeated many times, such that the loose outline of a face was gradually transformed into a mass of charcoal lines where only extremities and orifices remain visible. In both cases the sense is of a face coming into being in the same process in which finds its dissolution.

If there is a mythical dimension to JocJonJosch's employment of circles, it is one that is tempered by the embodied nature of the process of making and the insistent materiality of the resulting trace. The logic of the works displayed in the present exhibition is circular, but it is not metaphysical. The process rarely, if ever, comes full circle. A material residue always corrupts the circle, makes a mess of its geometry. Never, to my knowledge, do the artistic processes the collective set in train result in success. Instead, to paraphrase Samuel Beckett's words, in each work the artists seem to fail better. The same might be said for the large sculptural digging tool, *Tool*, whose function can be imagined, but which nevertheless seems too fragile to perform the labour for which it is designed. To use the work would probably constitute an exercise in failure. But it is this that lends JocJonJosch's work its humanity.

Rye Dag Holmboe, September 2016

JocJonJosch

Joschi Herczeg

b. Basel, Switzerland, 1975

2001 - 2002	The University of New South Wales, Sydney, AU MA, Photomedia
1999 - 2000	Staffordshire University, Stoke on Trent, UK BA, Hons Photography
1994 - 1996	Academy of Performing Arts, Prague, CZ Graduated in partnership with Staffordshire University

Joc Marchington

b. London, England, 1976

2007 - 2008	Chelsea College of Art & Design, London, UK Postgraduate Diploma Motion Gra- phics
2003 - 2004	London College of Communicati- on, London, UK Magazine & Publishing Design
1995 - 1998	Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK BA, Hons History of Art & Anthropol- ogy

Jonathan Brantschen

b. Fiesch, Switzerland, 1981

2007 - 2008	Chelsea College of Art and Design, London, UK Postgraduate Diploma Motion Gra- phics
2006 - 2007	Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London, UK Fine Art (first year)
2001 - 2005	Ecole professionnelle des arts contemporains, Saxon, CH BA, Strip Cartoons / Illustration

Selected Exhibitions & Residencies

Oct 2016	Unil Triennale, Lausanne, CH Sculpture
Sept 2016	Dienstgebäude, Zürich, CH Group Show
Jul 2016	Kunst in der Stadt (KidS), Brig, CH Installation
Mar 2014	Parasol Unit, London, UK Screening and performance
Feb 2014	Weiss Galerie, Zürich, CH Exhibition and conversation
Jan 2014	TINA.B & MUBE Museum, Sao Paulo, BR Performance
Nov 2013	Musée d'art du Valais, Sion, CH Prix Manor Sion 2013
Oct 2013	Art Licks Weekend, London, UK Rowing 'Worstward Ho!
Oct 2012	Saatchi Gallery, London Performance and auction of Untitled

July 2012	Fondazione Aurelio Petroni, Naples, IT Residency
May 2012	The Photographers' gallery, London, UK Born In 1985
May 2012	Institute for Contemporary Arts (ICA), London, UK Panel discussion on JocJonJosch's Existere performance
Dec 2011	Peckham Hotel, London, UK Performance and video event
Oct 2011	TINA B. Prague Contemporary Art Festival, Prague, CZ Explosion photographs exhibited
July 2011	Testbed I, London, UK Existere
July 2011	Son gallery, London, UK Existere at Son Gallery
May 2011	Galerie Monika Wertheimer, Basel, CH Agreements of Collaboration
Mar 2011	Arte laguna Prize, Venice, IT Finalists of the International Arte Laguna Prize
Jan 2011	Son Gallery, London, England, UK Exercises in Failure
Dec 2010	Situation I, Ferme-Asile, Sion, CH Une exposition collective
Oct 2010	The Anna Mahler Project space, Spoleto, IT The Beasts
Aug 2010	Son gallery, London, UK The Beasts
July 2010	Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK Summer Exhibition 2010
May 2010	Institute for Contemporary Arts (ICA), London, UK ICA Live Weekends
March 2010	ChelseA space, London, UK 5th anniversary Exhibition

Jun 2009	Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK Summer Exhibition 2009
Nov 2008	Soga, Bratislava, Slovakia, SK Language of Humour

Collections & Awards

Oct 2013	Bernard soens and Mimi Dusselier, Waregem, B Collection
Aug 2013	Caldic collection, The Hague, NL Museum Voorlinden
Jan 2013	Prix Manor 2013, Sion, CH
Sept 2012	Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, UK Special Collections
July 2012	Arts Council England, UK Artists' International Development Fund
June 2012	Tate, London, UK Special book collection

June 2012	Chelsea College of Art & Design library, London, UK <i>Special Collections</i>
Dec 2011	Kunstsammlung der F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ag, Ch
Apr 2011	Swiss Cultural Fund in Britain, Ch / UK
Mar 2011	Arte laguna, Venice, IT <i>Special Prize "TINA B"</i>
Dec 2010	Förderpreis des Kantons Wallis, Ch <i>FCD-Collection</i>
Oct 2010	The Anna Mahler international Association, Spoleto, IT
Feb 2009	Radiological institute, Basel, CH

Lecturing

Chelsea College of Art & Design, London, UK
Visiting Lecturer

London South Bank University, London, UK
Associate Lecturer

Buckinghamshire New University, Buckinghamshire, UK
Associate Lecturer

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