

Peel

*Farah Al Qasimi, Meriem Bennani,
Dora Budor, Oto Gillen, Win McCarthy, Troy Michie,
Elle Pérez, Em Rooney, Heji Shin*

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All the odd things people pick up for food. Out of shells, periwinkles with a pin, off trees, snails out of the ground the French eat, out of the sea with bait on a hook. Silly fish learn nothing in a thousand years. If you didn't know risky putting anything into your mouth. Poisonous berries. Johnny Magories. Roundness you think good. Gaudy colour warns you off. One fellow told another and so on. Try it on the dog first. Led on by the smell or the look. Tempting fruit.

Ulysses, James Joyce
Chapter 8: Lestrygonians

Farah Al Qasimi (b. 1991 Abu Dhabi, UAE) works in performance, video and photography. Through these various avenues, she interrogates the power dynamics of popular image economies, particularly as they demarcate the contours of domestic and public spaces, while shaping perceptions of national identity and gender within the Gulf region as well as the larger globalized landscape.

Meriem Bennani (b. 1988 Rabat, Morocco) draws freely from the languages of reality TV, advertising, documentaries, phone footage and digital animation. From these, Bennani constructs euphoric (and sometimes absurdist) narratives whose pathos and humor shed light on the plight of characters at the intersection of clashing histories. Her work spans video, animation, sculpture, drawing, and installation.

Dora Budor (b. 1984 Zagreb, Croatia) crafts immersive environments that foreground the unseen labor of mainstream cinema, while considering new conditions for viewership. Often incorporating screen-used props from specific films, her sculptures and installations posit a different type of materiality that also unearths the deeper ideological subtexts of the Hollywood apparatus.

Oto Gillen (b. 1984 New York, NY) takes his cue from the long history of reportage, crafting an intimate yet unsentimental portrait of contemporary urban living. He captures the flux of everyday objects as well as the structures that rise and fall around us, such as One World Trade Center, which becomes emblematic of our new hyper-surveilled, yet oddly inscrutable age.

Win McCarthy (b. 1986 Brooklyn, NY) incorporates bits of found imagery, snapshots, writings, poetry and fragile materials, like plaster and cast glass, into his assemblage sculptures. Oftentimes, these function as self-portraits or stand-ins for bodies that are both emotive and completely banal.

Troy Michie (b. 1985 El Paso, TX) uses collage to create complex and highly personal topographies. Drawing equally from found elements as well as collected materials, his practice relies on totemic objects like clothing, hair and photographs as a way of positioning the viewer within a history-made-haptic that disrupts notions of class, race and masculinity.

Elle Pérez (b. 1989 Bronx, NY) distills moments of intimacy and emotional exchange in their photographs. Traditional categories of portraiture, still life and landscape become porous and co-mingle to explore a diffuse and everyday erotic life. Offering degrees of access to these scenes, Pérez underscores the political weight of visibility and, in turn, representation.

Em Rooney (b. 1983 Bridgeport, CT) builds intricate wall-based sculptures and reliefs that enact moments of framing. Often departing from an ordinary photographic element, these pieces appeal to materials with alchemical resonance (glass, pewter, wood) that also directly engage the parameters of the quotidian.

Heji Shin (b. 1976 Seoul, South Korea) works extensively as a commercial photographer, shooting editorial work as well as advertising campaigns. She often makes little distinction between 'commercial' and 'fine art' endeavors, bringing a similar performative approach to her subjects, which to date have included animals, expectant mothers as well as notable celebrities/public figures. The results put pressure on the boundaries of the visible with images that are as humorous as they are iconoclastic.