Tris vonna-michell’s exhibitions resemble Kafkaesque office scenes or by each visitor’s background. vonna-michell’s exhibitions work like three-versions of stories, and their reception is tinted by all the other histories and walls. They are extended through images and projections from still newer performative realizations lodge themselves in our perception as partially and sheets or scraps of paper; photos lying on tables and floors or pinned discard materials, summoning them up in endless sequences of projected and enlarging or shrinking them in proportion to the current state of instant is a potential repetition, interaction, overlay, or shift beforehand its production and reception. no linear progression of history exists; every narrative and the histories evoked, around the relationship between fiction and the narrative continually changes course, goes down the wrong track, and is deflected from its logical path of evolution. His stories may or may not be factual; nevertheless, sitting amid slide projectors, recording devices, constant turns in other directions, the projects of shredded scraps, the artist returned to Leipzig with his childhood photographs, calenders, decals, and clippings from newspapers and magazines as accompanying material, all in a green suitcase. He spent one month in a former Plattenbau (an East German prefabricated building, often a high-rise, built with individual precast concrete slabs), shredding all his materials and then fastening them back together again. Finally he organized the glossy photos into Ferrers Reicher chocolate boxes and the mate images and materials in envelopes. Fragments of his real past are collaged into a new identity, reconfiguring a history made of pictures and words. Through extended investigations that lead him to public monuments and buildings, the artist finds connections that he incorporates into his own history, relationships that he persistently abducts and carries off into absurdity time and again. for Heine/Huhn, the artist traveled to Berlin to research the links between three people in the city’s postwar history, including Reinhold Huhn, a guard at a train station near the border.

After August 13, 1961, the Asheiler Bahnhof functioned in the West sector of Berlin, but the S-Bahn was run by the East German government. Reinhold Huhn was one of many guards situated beneath the Ascheiler Bahnhof, controlling the expansive underground tunnels. Reinhold Huhn, a 21-year old East German border guard, shot dead by a West Berlin escape agent on June 18, 1962. The Communist party commemorates him as a hero in the fight against the West. A protect for furthering the perfection of the border system.

A school was erected in memory of Reinhold Huhn, and a monument raised. But a reputation remained. Huhn’s wife, Erika, penning a curious memorial text in which she sought to put at rest all perspectives. My only apology, a chink of spray-painted rubble: found, hand-held and photographed, depicted and printed on a loose sheet of paper, formerly a marker between words, between these words, but now a loose association, another fleeting image.1

The artist book from which the above quote is excerpted realizes the indefinable flow of his process, this perpetual reconfiguration of facts and stories. After writing the full book, integrating all of the works he had selected, he improvised, making variations and changes throughout the entire text. As with his work in general, there is no conclusive version, merely ongoing iterations. Two different editions of the book circulate in stores, each bearing the same cover. Both editions, indistinguishable at a glance, contain texts written by the artist about his works and performance transcripts. vonna-michell developed the variations through repeated performances on top of previous versions of the text and adjusting various visual elements. The first book grew out of a project Capstans (2009) at the Alle for Kunst in Lübeck, Germany, in which several parts of the book were printed in the space. Created in 2010, the second book, an improvisation of an improvisation, expanded the first version through further revision of the texts, images, and inserted material.

Stunning high-speed soliloquies, a reality that weaves historical details and fabrications into a multiplicity of possible histories.

Characterized by ceaseless unfolding, interconnection, superimposition, and constant turns in other directions, the projects of shredded scraps, the artist returned to Leipzig with his childhood photographs, calenders, decals, and clippings from newspapers and magazines as accompanying material, all in a green suitcase. He spent one month in a former Plattenbau (an East German prefabricated building, often a high-rise, built with individual precast concrete slabs), shredding all his materials and then fastening them back together again. Finally he organized the glossy photos into Ferrers Reicher chocolate boxes and the mate images and materials in envelopes. Fragments of his real past are collaged into a new identity, reconfiguring a history made of pictures and words. Through extended investigations that lead him to public monuments and buildings, the artist finds connections that he incorporates into his own history, relationships that he persistently abducts and carries off into absurdity time and again. for Heine/Huhn, the artist traveled to Berlin to research the links between three people in the city’s postwar history, including Reinhold Huhn, a guard at a train station near the border.

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The parallel narratives leading into diverse plot lines culminated in an archival-like recording station within the exhibition in Zurich. Collapsing time and space while updating private histories also pertains to Wasteful Illuminations, in which he interfaces a trip to Japan made in his youth with a new experience of the country, based on the places and people he revisited.

Vonna-Michell’s taking performances and installations of images and texts stimulate and question a continuous historiographic process centered on the now of the factual, the now of experience and interpretation. The stories’ claims to validity, however, lie in their live realization, through the production and unfolding of language issued from the artist in propria persona. Vonna-Michell harnesses and simultaneously revisits. his works are both performances and mental processes that spontaneously. his works are both performances and mental processes that spontaneously.

Selected Exhibition History

b. 1982, Southend-on-Sea, United Kingdom
Lives and works in Stockholm, Sweden, and Southend-on-Sea

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2010
Focal Point Gallery, Southend-on-Sea, UK. No more racing in circles—and pacing within lines of a rectangle, Jan. 11–Mar. 20.
X Initiative, New York, Phone: 2.urname-Michell, July-Oct.
Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich, Auto-Tracking, Auto-Tracking, June 8–Aug. 16.
2008
Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich, Auto-Tracking, Apr. 12–May 18.
Kunstverein Braunschweig, Brunswick, Germany. Pieces, Sept. 1–Nov. 11.
BOZAR EXPO, Palais des beaux-arts/Palace voor schone kunsten, Brussels, Belgium (organized with NICC, Antwerp, Belgium). Fais un effort, Tris Vonna-Michell: Down the Rabbit Hole, Oct. 22–Dec. 3.
GROUP EXHIBITIONS

WIELS Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels, Belgium, The Other Tradition, Feb. 28–May 22.
Creative Time, New York, PLOT09: This Week & Neuter Ones, June 22–Sept. 20.

SOHO Trading (2008). Fig. 6 links another investigation into Berlin, which was initiated for his participation in the 2008 Berlin Biennial and extends from his temporary residence in Detroit in December 2007. The journey was catalyzed by the artist’s seemingly unremarkable discovery in a secondhand charity shop in Southend, UK. VHS tapes of old RobotCop movies (1987–93). These gloomy and brutal science-fiction thrillers included another layer of mediation: “Vonna-Michell sought to establish a metaphor that connected the now of the factual, the now of experience and interpretation. The stories’ claims to validity, however, lie in their live realization, through the production and unfolding of language issued from the artist in propria persona. Vonna-Michell harnesses and simultaneously revisits. his works are both performances and mental processes that spontaneously. his works are both performances and mental processes that spontaneously.

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