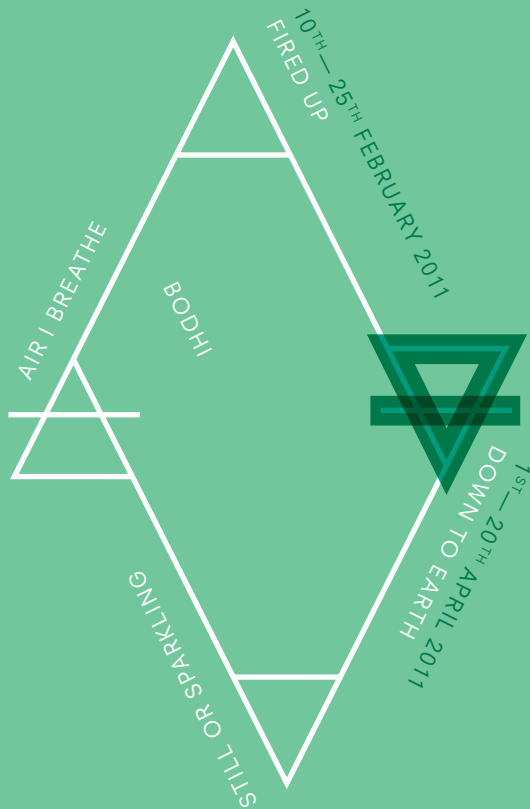


GAZELLI ART HOUSE PRESENTS

SHOW TWO OF FIVE

DOWN TO EARTH



LOCATION
THE STUDIO, 2 KINGDOM STREET
PADDINGTONCENTRAL
LONDON, W2 6PY

SHOWCASING NEW WORKS BY
AZIZ + CUCHER
JANE McADAM FREUD
NIYAZ NAJAFOV
SAAD QURESHI
MARK PRETHERO

Foreword

At the core of life flickers a powerful flame inspiring us to move forward.

Fired Up presented works by talented young artists, Joe Clark, Lauren Cotton, David Jones, Rory McCartney and Farid Rasulov. Purposefully interfering with the space, the vibrant works clashed and complimented each other referencing to the uncertain, dynamic and inconsistent nature of the primary element, fire. An attempt was made to reach out on a personal level, engaging and awakening your emotional response to contemporary art.

Building on the platform of this emotional upheaval from *Fired Up*, *Down To Earth* explores the subtleties of nature in its raw entirety, through which the viewer can intuitively discover a deeper layer of their persona.

The complex relationship between one's internal and external self is illustrated in the intense and intriguing oil on canvas works by Niyaz Najafov. Jane McAdam Freud taps into the human psyche through her depictions of the living in sculptures made of traditional medium, while Aziz + Cucher present the delicate nature of life, drawing their attention to the composition rather than the overview of the subject matter. Saad Qureshi reinforces the search for a deeper sense of connection through his conceptual installations, whilst Mark Prethero's photography captures the stillness of time, creating a void to reflect and gain composure.

For every exhibited artwork, Gazelli Art House strives to create a specific setting to challenge the common perception of contemporary arts. It is your interest that fuels this drive and I thank you for trusting us to take you on this journey.

Mila Askarova

CEO & Founder
Gazelli Art House

Down To Earth

“So if they did not come from air or water or fire, Then earth must be the mother of all the living creatures.” †

As the only material solid of the five classical elements, Earth represents mankind’s most tangible connection to our own nature and its place within the greater metaphysical universe. Worship of the Great Goddess, “who is also called Gaia, Geo, Ge, the Earth,” has a pagan tradition extending as far back as 12,000 BC. Anarchic cults and prehistoric clans celebrated Mother Earth for both her material and transcendental offerings, especially those that revealed a profound and mystical interconnectivity between the Earth, the cosmos and all living species. In his definitive work *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James writes

“In mystic states we both become one with the Absolute and we become aware of our oneness...In Hinduism, in Neoplatonism, in Sufism, in Christian mysticism, in Whitmanism, we find the same recurring note, so that there is about mystical utterances an eternal unanimity...which brings it about that the mystical classics have, as has been said, neither birthday nor native land.”

It’s been argued that such mystical states played a vital role in the initial development of spoken communication, essentially giving ancient man the power of self-expression and the means to convey his perception of the world. The shamans of these archaic rites have been described as

“the remote ancestor of the poet and the artist...one who has attained a vision of the beginnings and the endings of all things and *who can communicate that vision.*”

In *Down to Earth*, artists Aziz + Cucher, Jane McAdam Freud, Niyaz Najafov, Saad Qureshi, and Mark Prethero each offer their creative vision in response to the broad subject of this most sacred classical element. The selected works presented in *Down to Earth* vary from abstracted digital media to more traditional vessels of figurative representation, with each artist conceptualizing our shared terrestrial origins in his/her own specific visual language.

Synaptic Bliss, Aziz + Cucher’s four-channel video installation of undulating organic forms, incites a state of *ersatz* psychedelic euphoria that recalls pagan rites invoking the Transcendent Other. In his book *Food of the Gods*, Terence McKenna writes, “Immersion in the psychedelic experience provided the ritual context in which human consciousness merged into the light of self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-articulation — into the light of Gaia, the Earth herself.”

Through a process utilizing modern tools such as photoshop and digitization, Aziz + Cucher achieve a similar yet artificial sensation via technology. Four screens create a complete, self-contained yet unobstructed environment, digitally enhanced for visceral effect. Rapidly vacillating colors and patterns splinter and dissolve into new animated

compositions that melodically glide across each screen, visible from both outside and inside the installation. Electronic music composed by sound designer Tarikh Korula accompanies the piece. In what could be classified as minimal techno, the sounds’ ambient structure gains momentum at times, coaxing forth hints of hedonistic post-modern nightlife, the modern-day bacchanal.

Aziz + Cucher thus give credence to the ritual worship of life, pleasure and ephemera in both modern and archaic society. Intended to digitally convey a life cycle, *Synaptic Bliss* heightens the viewer’s sensory apparatus and confronts him with a hypnotic simulacrum of his own internal and intangible being. *Parkett Senior US Editor* Cay Sophie Rabinowitz writes of *Synaptic Bliss* that,

“The works in this series appear like electronic impressionism with almost hallucinatory, disorientating effects...This total sensorial experience is about merging exterior and interior, and thus as a total work it represents an attempt to stimulate and reveal the self within.”

Jane McAdam Freud’s clay and grit sculptures literally engage the Earth element as her chosen material. Freud states that her work’s medium is “about borrowing from the earth and giving it back, so-to-speak... For this reason, I often set the works in earth when they are shown inside.” Her piece *Partrap* is one such example, presented in the exhibition as embedded in an Earthly foundation.

Two enormous heads, entitled *Stonespeak 2 & 3*, also attest to Freud’s belief in matter ultimately returning to Earth. Positioned to appear as though their forms continue underground, these massive sculptures recall ancient totemic worship and idolatry. Allusions to Stonehenge and other prehistoric pagan temples ensconce these works with an uncanny symbolism, leaving the viewer unsure if they belong to our time or have emerged from some ancient sect.

As the daughter of painter Lucian Freud and the granddaughter of Sigmund Freud, the ancestry of this particular artist compels additional readings of her sculpture in relation to psychological portraiture. However, it is the McAdam family legacy that inspired her use of materials in *Earth Works*. The artist states, “The grit I use in *Earth Works* has the iconography of identity in terms of using a material that has a connection with my name, ie the McAdam part, which comes from the Scottish Macadam, after which the road surface Tarmacadam is named.”

In Freud’s sculptures, the notion of rebirth is inherent to her use of Earth and her desire to return what she has taken to the Earth. Rebirth or reincarnation, a belief held by the Greek Philosopher-poet Empedocles, who originally postured the classical elements, is a recurring theme throughout Eastern religion, paganism and other Goddess-worshipping subcultures. Through Freud’s colossal sculptures, we are re-introduced to the archaic by way of the contemporary. Her imagery returns us to our most primordial selves.

Invoking the dark romanticism of artists such as Delacroix and the German Expressionists, whose perception of nature was often as brutal and violent as it was sublime, Niyaz Najafov's canvases revel in the sensuousness of his palette and the harshness of his imagery. Rich shades of ochre, reds and other earth tones dominate these paintings. Originally a soldier in Azerbaijan, Najafov's lack of formal arts training allows his practice to connect with the most vital source of his creative nature. Considering that, as a soldier, Najafov no doubt witnessed the savagery of man, his paintings expound the universal human need for self-expression as a response to trauma, pain and suffering.

Najafov's densely applied colors and aggressive brush work bear similarities to the paintings of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff and Otto Mueller, all members of the German Expressionist group Die Brücke (The bridge). A noticeable break from realism and an attention to the visceral accentuate his canvases' already dramatic impressions. As with the artists of Die Brücke, who understood their name not literally, but rather as a metaphor for an *Übergang*, a transition from one state of being to another, Najafov's paintings expose the artist's raw nature and that of his subjects. Returning again to the mystical, these paintings, as with their expressionist predecessors, unearth the eternal *Wesen* or essence that flows through all living beings, as vital and untamed as nature herself.

"The Earth, as we know, was our mother and also will be our tomb and what is diminished in one place grows again somewhere else." †

Saad Qureshi's monumental sculpture addresses the sanctity of human life by confronting our species' self-destructive trajectory, the misdeeds of man and society's increasing alienation from our shared spirituality. The 9 meter long construction was modeled after a minaret, the traditional towers of Islamic mosques. However, Qureshi's abstracted interpretation of the tower's shape departs from literal references to the Islamic religion and instead emphasizes the phallic nature of this particular form, which the artist has broken in sections as a demonstrative gesture of the discord wrought by man.

Working together with his family to construct the piece, a collective method of production that he considers integral to the work's resolution, Qureshi's minaret embodies both the holiness of ancestry, as well as the profanity and terror incited by modern religious fanaticism. The sculpture's burnt wooden frame has been half-filled with cement and then sealed with a mixture of wattle and daub, invoking the traditional habitats and simple building techniques employed by settlers in diverse regions spanning the globe. Qureshi's piece thus unites the literal use of Earth with its symbolic iconography: Earth as both a symbolic building material and a framework for sacred contemplation.

Originally inspired by reports of a suicide bombing at a mosque in Afghanistan, Qureshi describes this work as, "a metaphor that speaks of greater things...a messenger of the failure of communication and the brutality which ensues," thus declaring a state of emergency for our earthly co-habitation, but not without hope for resilience. Within the sculpture's core, viewers will notice the faint beating of a heart. This recording, taken at the moment of a baby's birth, leads the viewer away from the horror of modern warfare and returns him to the divine rhythm of life at its most innocent.

"...the earth is like all women and as it aged it has lost the fecundity it had." †

Mark Prethero's photographic images capture the gothic beauty of the Czech landscape. Shot in black and white, Prethero's works convey a sense of sublime decay, of a ruminating spirit that inhabits our shared environment, even now on the eve of its impending destruction. In the tradition of landscape photographers such as Ansel Adams and Robert Adams, Prethero instills his woodland and pastoral scenes with a dramatic poetry that borders on the cinematic. The individuals he places within these settings become a part of their surroundings, enveloped by the nature from which our modern culture has brutally removed itself.

His photographs should not, however, be understood as eulogies, nor as eco-critiques of man's continued and increasing desecration of the environment. Rather, they are soliloquies, intimate moments in which the protagonist of each image privately addresses his or her world. The viewer is left not with a feeling of dread or despair, but with a soft melancholy, at once both morbid and life-affirming. Through these surreal snapshots, as seductive as they are sinister, Prethero bequeaths us his own personal perception of the Earth, one that is beautiful despite all of its darkness.

"Let us review: the earth, the sea, the sun's heat, and the winds, That compose the sum of things all consist of bodies that are born and die... we cannot doubt that heaven and earth had their time of beginning and face their time of ending." †

The artists brought together in *Down to Earth* represent vastly differing cultural and ethnic backgrounds, yet their works reveal a shared optimism in the vitality of nature, the cosmos and humanity's eternal place therein. In his writings on mystics, William James remarks on this optimism " They tell of the supremacy of the ideal, of vastness, of union, of safety and of rest...The supernaturalism and optimism to which they would persuade us may, interpreted in one way or another, be after all the truest of insights into the meaning of this life."

Ultimately, *Down to Earth* exposes the persisting universality of Earth as a contemplative wellspring, a perpetual source for artistic creation. The artists presented allow us access to their own individual visions of Earth, mankind and the Transcendent Other, even as our civilization becomes more and more alienated from its natural genesis and races towards the precipice of its own "time of ending."

Emilie Trice

Emilie Trice is a curator and writer based in Berlin.

† **The Nature of Things, Book V**, Lucretius

Food of the Gods, Terence McKenna. Bantam Books, New York, 1992.

Pg. 78. Ibid. Pg. 73, Pp. 48-54. Pg. 7, Pg. 93.

The Varieties of Religious Experience, William James. Penguin Books, NY, 1953. Pg. 350, Pg. 357.

Aziz + Cucher Exhibition Catalogue, Cay Sophie Rabinowitz. Artereal Gallery, Sydney, 2006.

Expressionismus, Dietmar Elger. Taschen, Köln, 2002. Pg. 15.



Aziz + Cucher
SB_ODA #7, 2004
C-print on Endura metallic paper
with aluminium mount, 76 x76 cm



Aziz + Cucher
Synaptic Bliss: Villette, 2004
4-channel video installation
with surround sound, Dimensions
variable, 16' loop



Jane McAdam Freud
Stone Speak 3, 2010
Clay, Sculpture, 76 x 70 x 50 cm



Jane McAdam Freud
1+, 2010
Clay, sculpture, 35 x 150 x 130 cm

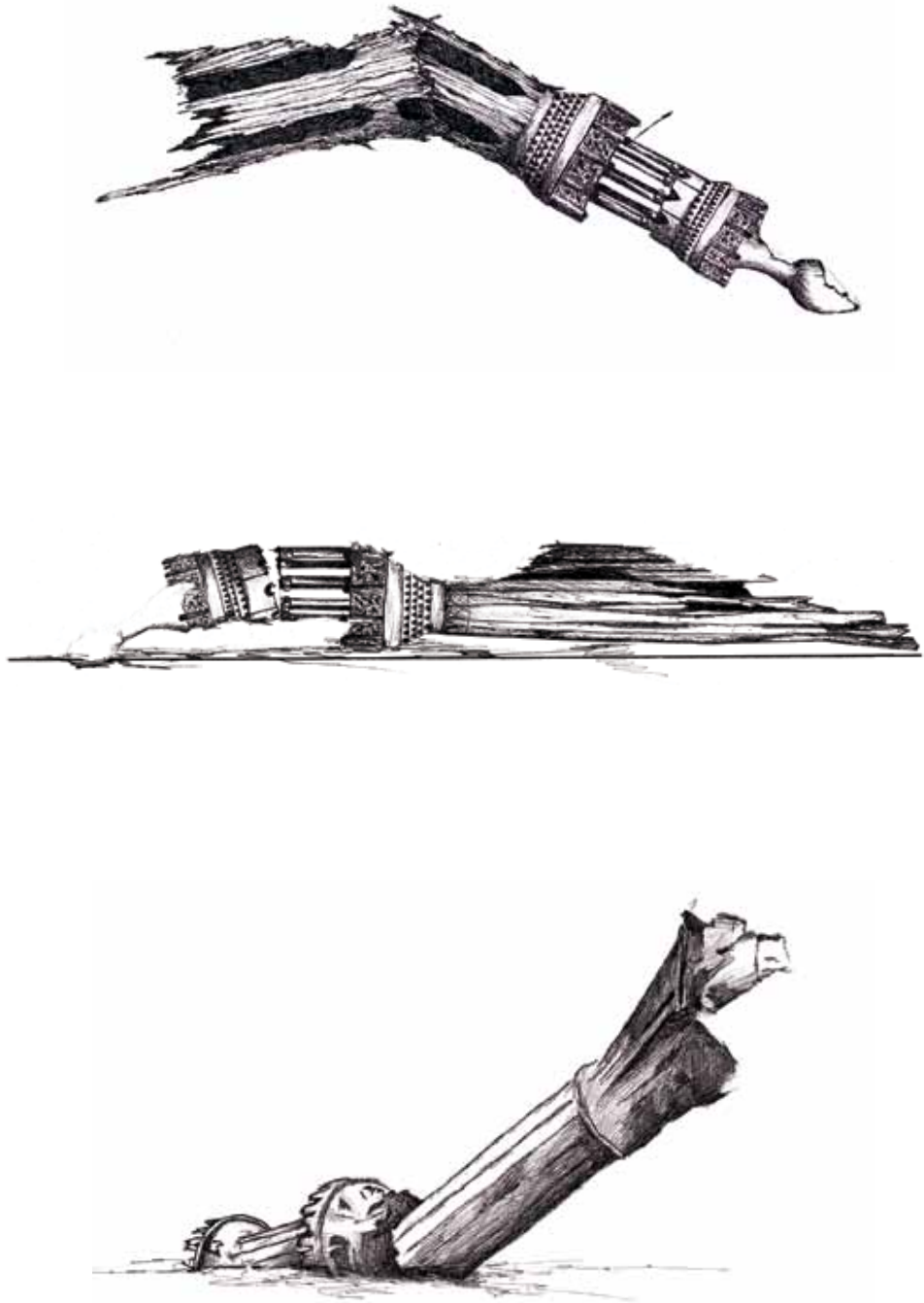
(Opposite) Niyaz Najafov
Freefall, 2011

Oil on canvas, 140 x 195cm

Niyaz Najafov
Untitled, 2011

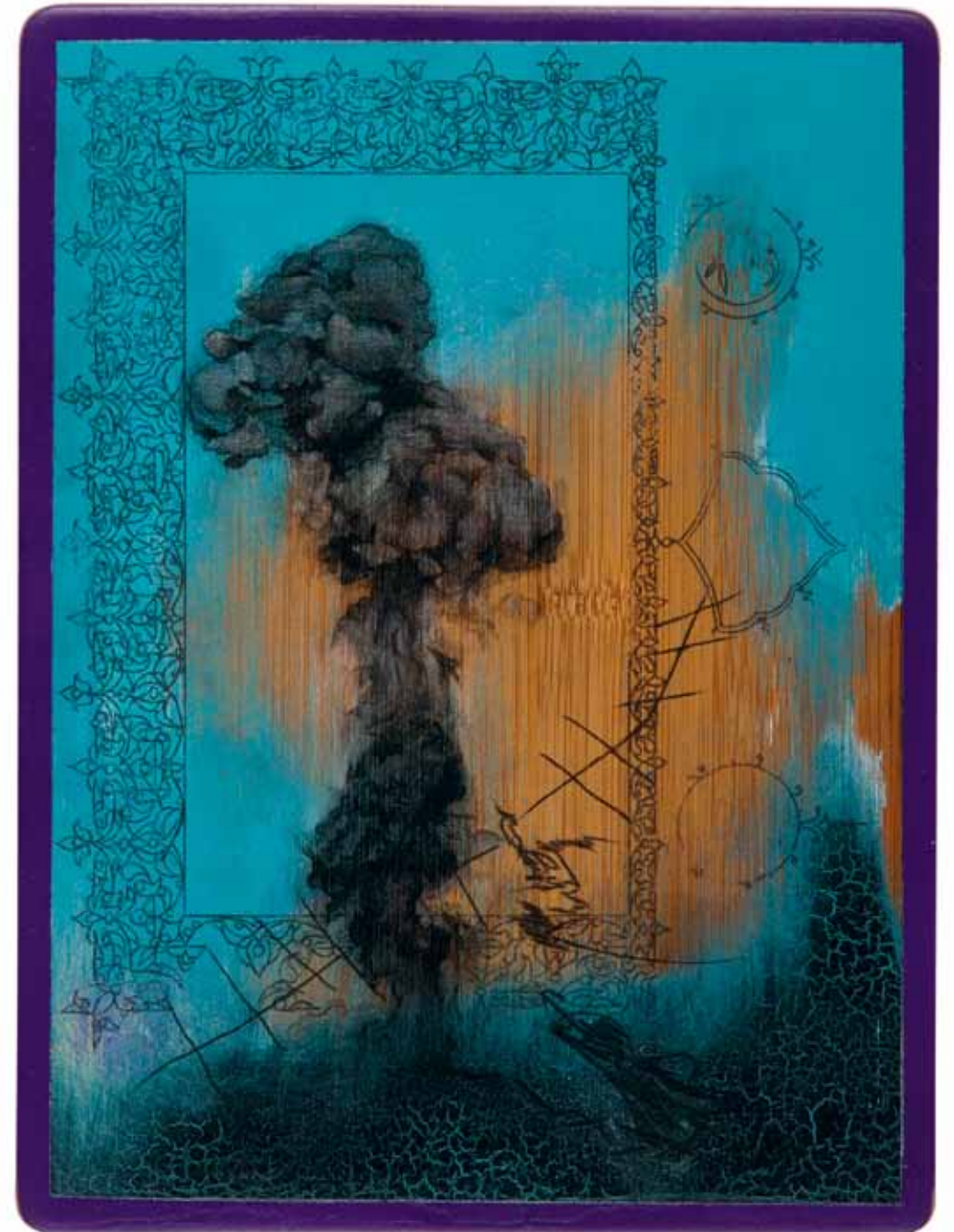
Oil on canvas, 140 x 195cm





(Opposite) Saad Qureshi
Research drawings for Down To Earth exhibition, 2011
Ink on paper, Dimensions variable

Saad Qureshi
The Colour of Darkness, 2010
Pencil, oil & spray paint, wax pencil on wood, 29 x 22 cm





Mark Prethero
Untitled 1, 2008
Digital c-type photographic print
117 x 91cm, Edition of 5



Mark Prethero
Untitled 1, 2008
Digital C-Type Photographic Print,
117 x 91cm, Edition of 5



Solo Exhibitions

- 2011** *Some People*, Indianapolis Museum of Art Aziz + Cucher, Sultan Gallery, Kuwait
- 2009** *Aziz + Cucher*, National Museum of Art, Kaunas, Lithuania
- 2008** *Scenapse: New Photography*, ClampArt, New York
Scenapse: New Photography, Galeria Trama, Barcelona
Scenapse: New Photography, Galeria Trama, Madrid
Aziz + Cucher, Stiftelsen Art Center, Bergen, Norway
Koopman Award Exhibition, University of Hartford Art Galleries
- 2006** *Synaptic Bliss & Interiors*, Arterreal, Sydney, Australia
- 2005** *Synaptic Bliss*, Galeria Trama, Barcelona and Madrid
- 2004** *Synaptic Bliss*, Villette Numerique Parc de la Villette, Paris
- 2003** *Project Space*, 3rd Floor Men's Store, Bergdorf Goodman, NYC
- 2002** *PASSAGE*, Herzliya Museum of Art, Israel
- 2001** *Recent work*, Henry Urbach Gallery, New York
New Work, Galerie Yvonamor Palix, Paris
- 2000** *Series 96:00*, Museo Alejandro Otero, Caracas, Venezuela

Group Exhibitions

- 2010** *Paradesign*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco
- 2009** *Huesped*, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 2007** *Double Vision*, Deutsche Bank, New York
- 2006** *A Curator's Eye: The Visual Legacy of Robert A. Sobieszek*, LACMA, Los Angeles
- 2004** *Photography and the Death of the Portrait*, Hayward Gallery, London
- 2002** *Out of Site*, New Museum of Contemporary Art, NY (curated by Anne Ellegood)
Selected Awards & Residencies
- 2009** C-Collection Development Grant/ Berlin Residency June-December 2009. Koopman Distinguished Chair in the Arts. Hartford Art School, University of Hartford.
- 2007** Faculty Development Fund, Parsons The New School for Design, New York

Selected Public & Private Collections

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid
Fond National d'Art Contemporain, Paris, France
Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne
Sammlung Berger Foundation, Amorbach, Germany

Selected Articles

- 2011** Hillarie Sheets, "Dynamic Duos" , ARTNEWS, February
- 2008** Vince Aletti, THE NEW YORKER, May 26
- 2006** Brian Dillon, TATE ETC., Tate Modern, London, Issue #8, Autumn
- 2001** David Hunt, "Reviews," FLASH ART, June
Nico Israel, "Reviews," ARTFORUM, March
- 2000** Frazer Ward, "Cumulus," PARKETT # 60, December

Publications

- 2009** Residency: A Photographic Journey, Aziz + Cucher
- 2008** Eleanor Heartney, ART AND TODAY, Phaidon, New York
- 2002** Ellen Lupton, Skin, catalogue, Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York

Solo Exhibitions

- 2011** *Austria General Consulate Gallery*, Cracow, Poland
Sundaram Tagore Gallery, NY, USA
- 2010** *Centre for Jewish Culture*, Cracow, Poland
Sundaram Tagore Gallery, Beverly Hills, CA, USA
New Center of Psychoanalysis, LA, USA
Stone Speak, Freud Museum, London
- 2010-2009** *Atonement*, London Centre for Psychotherapy
TwoGether, (2 Man Show) Art Workers Guild, Bloomsbury, London
- 2009** *Screening and Presentation*, National Arts Club, Gramercy Park, NYC, USA
Kosciuszko Foundation NYC, USA
Harrow and Wembley Progressive Synagogue Repetitions, New York Psychoanalytic Society, NYC, USA
Screening- MediaTek Lecture, Lung Yingtai Foundation, Taipei, Taiwan
- 2008** *Screening- Philoctetes* Centre for the Imagination, NYC, USA
- 2007** *Muzeum Novojjinska*, Moravia, Czech Republic
Harrow Museum, London
- 2006** *Beverley Knowles Fine Art*, London
Freud Museum
Adele Boag Gallery, Adelaide, Australia
- 2004** *Ashmolean Museum*, Oxford
- 2001** *The Gallery*, University College Cork
- 2000** *Det Norske Veritas*, London Bridge

Group Exhibitions

- 2010** *Scienar*, National University of Art, Bucharest, Romania
- 2009** *Art on the Edge*, Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro
Fresh Air, Quenington Sculpture Trust

Awards

- 2010** *Lord Freud Sculpture Commission*
Prime Warden Medal, Goldsmiths Hall
- 2009** Oxford University Sheldon Medal portrait commission
- 2005** Artist in Residence, Freud Museum, London
- 2002** J Paul Getty commission – double portrait medal
- 2000** Arts Council Lottery Award for interactive World Flag Project

Selected Public & Private Collections

Victoria & Albert Museum, London
British Museum, London
Berlin State Museum
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
National Museum of Copenhagen
Brooklyn Museum, New York
Museum of Modern Art, Zendai, China

Solo Exhibitions

- 2011** *Terres de Pensee*, Brissot Gallery, Paris
LabArt, Melun, France
Avant Première, l-Gallery, Paris, France.
- 2010** *Solo exhibition*, Vivienne Gallery, Paris
Year of Russia in France, Brissot Gallery
Niyaz-Daria, Vivienne Gallery, Paris
Cairo International Biennale, Cairo, Egypt
International Cite des Arts, Moscow, Russia
Vision Solidaires, Brissot Gallery, Paris
- 2009** *53th Venesia Biennale of Contemporary Art*
Contemporary Art Museum, permanent member
Basel Art Fair, Pavilion of Azerbaijan
Solo exhibition, French Embassy in Azerbaijan
Solo exhibition, Kichik Qalart, Baku
- 2008** *Year of Azerbaijan in Germany*", Ministry
of foreign affairs, Berlin
Denmark, Rodby, Singverdson Bo Gallery
- 2007** *5+ (Museum Center)*, Baku
Kassel Art Fai, Germany
- 2006** *Geneva*, U.N.O
- 2005** *Man and Woman* (Museum center), Baku

Solo Exhibitions

- 2011** *Format International Photography Festival*, Derby.
Format 11 Award, March/April
London Art Fair, exhibited with Gazelli Art
House, London, January
- 2010** *Manesova 92*, The Objective Gallery, Prague
CZ November/December
Beyond the Real, Acquire Arts, Battersea Park
Road, London, August
University of Derby Degree show, Markeaton
Street Campus.
- 2007** *Photography Exhibition*, Hull College Arts
& Design, UK

Awards

- 2011** Format International Photography Prize
awarded upon graduating

Solo Exhibitions

- 2011** *London Art Fair* for Gazelli Art House, January
India Art Summit, Delhi (Aicon Gallery, New York)
- 2010** *Gift*, 10 Vyner Street, November
Between, Patrick Heide Contemporary Art, London
Disappearing in Yesterday, October
Deceit, Hackney Wicked Festival, July
- 2009** *Don't raise the Bridge, Lower the water*,
Saatchi Gallery, September
- 2008** *Obsessions*, Modern Art Oxford, October
- 2007** *Wound*, Aicon Gallery, London
- 2006** *Royal Academy Summer Exhibition*, Royal
Academy of the Arts, London

Awards

- 2009** The Red Mansion Foundation Prize
- 2008** AHRC Postgraduate Award
- 2004** Oxford Brookes University Scholarship
Spellman Walker Art Competition, First Prize

Selected Public & Private Collections

Almarkhiya Gallery, Qatar

Catalogue

To add subsequent pages to this catalogue simply turn the three binding bolts anti-clockwise, remove the back cover, place the new pages on top of this section and replace the back cover then turn the bolts clockwise until finger tight.

