

ALEXANDER LEE

Born in 1974 in Stockton, California, USA. Lives in Papeete, Tahiti, French Polynesia. Solo exhibitions at the Clementine and Newman Popiashvili Galleries in New York, Kinkead Contemporary in Los Angeles and Collectors Contemporary in Singapore. Recent group exhibitions include ‘Örama’ at Te Fare Manaha/Musée de Tahiti et des Îles in Papeete in 2016. In 2017, Lee participates in the 1st Honolulu Biennial and in ‘Tidialectics’ at TBA21 in Vienna.

In his multi-media practice, Alexander Lee addresses Polynesian myths, his own Hakka Chinese roots and the colonial history of Oceania. The US and France carried out extensive nuclear test explosions in these archipelagos, now at risk from rising sea levels.

Working on all the walls in the exhibition space, Lee has provided a visual setting for ‘A Temporary Futures Institute’ that references the Polynesian territory of Hawaii as the environment where Jim Dator elaborated his ‘four futures’. *Te fanau’a ‘una’una nā te Tumū: The Sentinels*, 2017, unites Oceanian motifs: the sea itself; the leaf of the breadfruit tree, transplanted from Tahiti to feed the slaves on Caribbean plantations; the atomic mushroom cloud. The title also alludes to a Tahitian priest’s prediction of the arrival of new people from across the ocean. *The Botanical Factory III*, 2017, is a series of prints on fabric, made together with visitors to the exhibition. *Petroglyphs (Fenua Enata/Terre des Hommes)*, 2017, is an installation with enlarged ink rubbings of petroglyphs from the Marquesas Islands in French Polynesia, produced with support from the Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Academy.

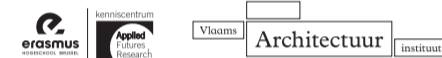
We thank Air Tahiti Nui for supporting Alexander Lee’s travel.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

‘A Temporary Futures Institute’ is organised by M HKA within the framework of ‘The Uses of Art’, a project by the European museum confederation L’Internationale.



Other supporters and partners of the exhibition:



M HKA is an initiative of the Flemish Community and is supported by the City of Antwerp, De Morgen, Klara, H ART, De Olifant and Allen & Overy.



TEMPORARY PRESENTATIONS

In addition to works by the four futurists (or groups of futurists) and the nine artists, ‘A Temporary Futures Institute’ will also host temporary presentations.

The first is a selection of watercolours by **Izmail Efimov** (born in 1946, lives in Yoshkar-Ola, Republic of Mari El, Russian Federation), recently acquired for the M HKA collection. Efimov, who first emerged as a socialist realist painter in the mid-1970s, is one of the most original ethno-futurist artists. This term was invented in Estonia in the 1980s. In the 1990s, the Finno-Ugrian regions of European Russia adopted it to name a new cultural movement, ‘leaning on the past, working for the future’.

The second presentation will appear in mid-June. **‘Prelude: A Weaving Generation’** showcases objects – references to ongoing research or models for future projects – by a new generation of architects in the Low Countries. Produced by the Flemish Architecture Institute, it was originally part of an exhibition at the Deutsches Architekturmuseum in Frankfurt am Main in 2016.

MEDIATION

‘Walk and Talk’ tours on Thursdays at 7.30–8.30pm and on Sundays at 2–3pm are free with a valid admission ticket. No reservation needed. Guided tours in Dutch, English, French and German can be booked for a fee at reservatie@muhka.be.

The Salon on the first floor is for families and young visitors. On Sundays at 2–4pm, our hosts will receive you for creative activities, free with a valid admission ticket. No reservation needed. See the M HKA website (www.muhka.be) for more information.

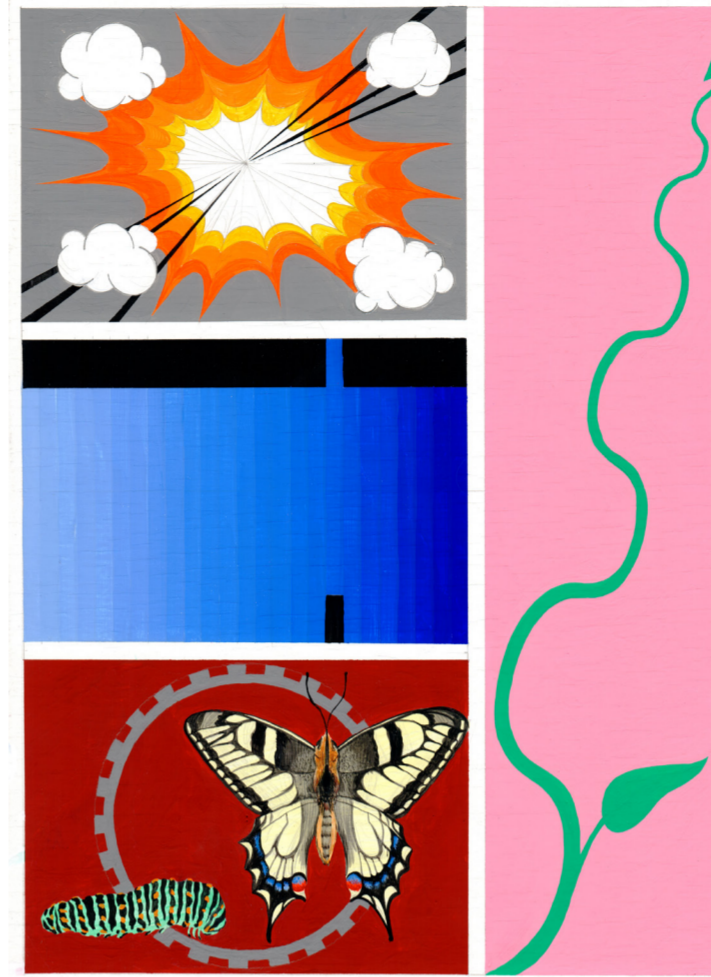
Futures studies offers polylogues, allowing us to exchange opinions and elaborate a common vision for possible futures. We offer visitors to the exhibition a new digital tool. **Storypix** is an audio-sharing platform that lets you record and listen to voice-messages. We’d love to hear what you have to say about futures!

At ensembles.org you will find a wealth of information on the exhibited works and the participating futurists and artists. Just scan the QR-code!



M HKA

A TEMPORARY FUTURES INSTITUTE



28.04-17.09.2017

Kasper Bosmans, Legend: A Temporary Futures Institute, 2016

FOUR FUTURES

Just as futures studies does not seek to predict things to come, so also futures studies does not try to study ‘the future’, since ‘the future’ does not exist to be studied. What does exist, and what futurists can and often do study, are ‘images of the future’ in people’s minds.

– Jim Dator, *The Future Lies Behind*, 2002

No one knows what doesn’t yet exist. But identifying possible, probable and preferred futures can help us understand the present and the past. The plural is important; it reminds us not to try to predict the future, one single future. Just like art, futures studies (also called foresight) is more than a discipline. It is practice and method, a roundabout tour of understanding rather than a straight path to knowledge.

We wanted to bring professional futurists together with artists, to see what they might have in common and how they might question each other. Therefore we composed ‘A Temporary Futures Institute’ around the ‘four futures’ that Professor **Jim Dator** of the University of Hawaii proposed in the late 1960s. He identified ‘continued growth’, ‘collapse’, ‘discipline’ and ‘transformation’ as generic images we may use to envision preferred futures.

Dator writes: ‘I eventually decided that all of the many images of the future that exist in the world can be grouped into four generic piles – four alternative futures. [...] Each of the alternatives has “good” and “bad” features. None should be considered as either a bad or a good future per se.’

‘A Temporary Futures Institute’ wants us to think associatively and critically about things to come rather than looking back at how previous periods imagined ‘the future’. It uses the basic tools of exhibition-making – authors and audiences, pictures and stories, surfaces and spaces – to probe some possible futures. How shall exhibitions stimulate our thinking? Must they become immersive environments to lure us away from our screens? How autonomous will exhibitions, and the art and artists they feature, be in relation to the rest of the world?

The public programme for ‘A Temporary Futures Institute’ is a series of workshops addressing specific themes to do with futures: Antwerp, knowledge, diversity, fashion, the welfare state. Each workshop will last three hours and is led by a professional futurist. See the M HKA website (www.muhka.be) for more information, and sign up for the workshops at affi@muhka.be. Places are limited!

The international futures conference **‘Design, Develop, Transform’** takes place at M HKA on 16–17 June. It is co-organised with the Centre of Expertise Applied Futures Research – Open Time of the Erasmushogeschool in Brussels. (ddfconference.org)

All quotes are from Jim Dator, *Alternative Futures at the Manoa School*, 2009.

THE FOURTH ALTERNATIVE FUTURE FOCUSES ON THE POWERFULLY TRANSFORMING POWER OF TECHNOLOGY – ESPECIALLY ROBOTICS AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, GENETIC ENGINEERING, NANOTECHNOLOGY, TELEPORTATION, SPACE SETTLEMENT AND THE EMERGENCE OF A ‘DREAM SOCIETY’ AS THE SUCCESSOR TO THE ‘INFORMATION SOCIETY’. THIS FOURTH FUTURE IS CALLED ‘TRANSFORMATION’ OR THE ‘TRANSFORMATIONAL SOCIETY’ [...] THESE PEOPLE FEEL THAT PRECIOUS PLACES, PROCESSES AND VALUES ARE THREATENED OR DESTROYED BY ALLOWING CONTINUOUS ECONOMIC GROWTH. [...] THESE PEOPLE MAY ALSO SAY THAT WE SHOULD ORIENT OUR LIVES AROUND A SET OF FUNDAMENTAL VALUES – CAL OR CULTURAL – AND FIND A DEEPER PURPOSE IN LIFE THAN THE PURSUIT OF ENDLESS WEALTH AND CONSUMERISM. LIFE SHOULD BE ‘DISCIPLINED’ AROUND THESE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES [...]

A SECOND ALTERNATIVE FUTURE IS ‘COLLAPSE’ FROM ONE CAUSE OR ANOTHER (OR THEIR COMBINATION) AND EITHER TO EXTINCTION OR TO A LOWER ‘STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT’ THAN CURRENTLY. [...] IT SHOULD BE EMPHASISED THAT THE ‘COLLAPSE’ FUTURE IS NOT AND SHOULD NOT BE PORTRAYED AS A ‘WORST CASE SCENARIO’; MANY PEOPLE WELCOME THE END OF THE ‘ECONOMIC RAT-RACE’ AND YEARN FOR A SIMPLER LIFESTYLE. MOREOVER, IN EVERY ‘DISASTER’ THERE ARE ‘WINNERS’ AS WELL AS ‘LOSERS’.

THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION AND ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE IN THE PRESENT AND RECENT PAST IS TO BUILD A VIBRANT ECONOMY AND DEVELOP THE PEOPLE, INSTITUTIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES TO KEEP THE ECONOMY GROWING AND CHANGING, FOREVER. [...] THIS IS BY FAR THE MOST COMMON OF THE FOUR ALTERNATIVE FUTURES, SINCE ALMOST ALL OFFICIAL STATEMENTS ABOUT THE FUTURE ARE BASED ON ‘CONTINUED GROWTH’, AND USUALLY ‘CONTINUED ECONOMIC GROWTH’.

CONTINUED GROWTH

Agence Future, Darius Žiūra, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

The futurists and artists in this segment of ‘A Temporary Futures Institute’ meta-pherically interpret and critique the image of the future as ‘more of the same’, as an endlessly continuing process of enrichment and elaboration. They either visualise ongoing social processes in moving images supported by or liberated from spoken narration (Agence Future, Darius Žiūra) or offer a meditation on movement through time in a painting installation doubling as a built environment for paintings that pick out ‘lines’ or ‘threads’ or ‘strings’ of action or progress (Nina Roos).

Agence Future, Darius Žiūra, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

AGENCE FUTURE

Agence Future is the undertaking of an Antwerp-based creative duo: Dr. **Maya Van Leemput**, born in Antwerp in 1969, and photographer **Bram Goots**, born in Etterbeek, Belgium, in 1971. In the first years of the new millennium, the two travelled across five continents to conduct interviews with more than 300 people who shared their ideas, images and feelings about personal, local and global futures. Further participatory projects in Antwerp, Brussels, Grenoble, Perpignan, Lubumbashi, Paris and Trento continued to tackle the challenges of visual documentation, illustration and storytelling about futures, bringing the total number of interviews to well above 700.

Agence Future, Darius Žiūra, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

The multi-screen video installation *Conversation Piece, 2017*, shows how experts and ordinary people across the globe talk about their futures and highlights the various contexts in which images of the futures exist. To create understanding of what is at stake, Agence Future uses a variety of tools from the fields of futures studies, communications theory, visual ethnography and the arts. A *Timeline in Four Layers, 2017*, introduces the richly textured history of futures-oriented thought and practice from which these tools derive. *Toynbee Convector, 2016*, is a projection of photographic ‘images of a future’, shot in current reality to the detailed instructions of professional futurists.

NINA ROOS

Nina Roos, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

Born in Porvoo, Finland, in 1956. Lives in Helsinki. Numerous solo exhibitions, notably at Kiasma in Helsinki in 2001, at Malmö Konsthall, Sweden, in 2003 and at Moderna Museet in Stockholm in 2009. Represented Finland at the 46th Venice Biennale in 1995. Winner of the Carnegie Art Award, Stockholm, in 1998 and 2003. Professor of painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki in 2001–2004.

Nina Roos’s entire oeuvre since the early 1990s is a thoroughly and sophisticatedly argued plea for painting as a thinking practice and mode of being in the world. Painting, for her, is an ever-developing precision instrument. It is not *about* things; it *is* things. It is its own language. Painting also doesn’t strive to create recognisable, easily read images or a signature personal style. Instead it is, and must be, ever changing. With *Regarding the Point of Restraint, 2017*, a series of five paintings (of which one is a diptych) and the pavilion-like structure that supports and displays them, Roos seems to be saying that the same goes for exhibition-making, another practice that privileges thinking and precision and wants to promote the new, the unrecognisable.

Nina Roos, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

We thank Frame, Contemporary Art Finland, for supporting Nina Roos’s participation. *Regarding the Point of Restraint* is shown courtesy of Galerie Forsblom in Helsinki.

DARIUS ŽIŪRA

Born in Joniškėlis, Lithuania, in 1968. Lives in Vilnius. Numerous solo exhibitions, notably at CAC Vilnius in 1998, 2005–2006 and 2015. Numerous group exhibitions, including the 10th Kaunas Biennial, Lithuania, in 2015. Participated in Manifesta 5 in San Sebastian, Spain, in 2004 and in Manifesta 7 in Bolzano, Italy, in 2007. Receives a doctorate in Fine Arts from the Vilnius Art Academy in 2017.

The fact that ‘žiūra’ means ‘look’ in Lithuanian is perhaps not pure coincidence. In videos, photographs, installations and texts, Darius Žiūra observes, registers, formats, composes, without looking away when he sees uncomfortable or sometimes even unbearable realities. *Gustoniai*, named after the village in northern Lithuania where he grew up, is his longest-ongoing work to date. Beginning in 2001, he has revisited it every three years, making one-minute silent video portraits of all its inhabitants. The six films have now been recut and recomposed as a six-channel installation. Six simultaneous incarnations of the ‘same’ face as a metaphor for continuation. Black screens stand for the dead, the not-yet-born or the absent. 15 years in the life and development of a small community — growing up and growing old, leaving and returning, thriving and declining — but also of the video medium, of portraiture.

Darius Žiūra, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

COLLAPSE

Center for Postnormal Policy & Futures Studies, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

The second of the ‘four futures’ could be the most titillating. Who doesn’t secretly like to witness disaster and collapse — at a safe distance, in an art museum? But rather than offering graphic representations of doomsday scenarios, this segment of the exhibition looks at the ‘before and after’ of collapse, with under-the-skin glimpses of the American psyche that seem to prefigure both 9/11 and Trumpism (Michel Auder), the calm spectacle of nature reclaiming a failed real estate investment in the tropics (Simryn Gill) or a reality where all that was ‘normal’ has evaporated (Center for Postnormal Policy & Futures Studies).

CENTER FOR POSTNORMAL POLICY & FUTURES STUDIES

Professor **Ziauddin Sardar**, born in Dipalpur, Pakistan, in 1951, works across a number of disciplines, from futures studies and Islamic studies to science policy, literary criticism and information science to cultural relations, art criticism and critical theory. The London-based scholar has published over 50 books and is the editor of *Critical Muslim*, an innovative quarterly on contemporary Muslim thought. Professor Sardar is Director of the Center for Postnormal Policy & Futures Studies.

Center for Postnormal Policy & Futures Studies, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

Its Deputy Director **John A. Sweeney**, born in New York, USA, in 1977, leads a nomadic life. He is an international foresight practitioner, consultant and educator with extensive experience of developing contexts who has conducted educational workshops and run strategic gaming systems in multiple settings. Sweeney has served as Researcher at the Hawaii Research Center for Futures Studies, directed by Professor Jim Dator until his retirement.

Center for Postnormal Policy & Futures Studies, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

The installation *Postnormal Times, 2017*, shows futures characterised by Contradiction, Complexity and Chaos. The postnormal landscape is dominated by different Ignorances and Uncertainties. The postnormal menagerie of Black Swans, Black Elephants and Black Jellyfish help us understand emerging issues. In the *Polylogue* game, 2017, collapse demonstrates its potential for new beginnings as values are used to navigate the global, interconnected, accelerating change of postnormal times.

Center for Postnormal Policy & Futures Studies, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

Exhibition design by Aine Cassidy and her colleagues at Effusion in London.

MICHEL AUDER

Born in Soissons, France, in 1944. Lives in New York. Numerous solo exhibitions, notably at the Renaissance Society in Chicago in 2002, at Extra City in Antwerp in 2007, at Lunds konsthall, Sweden, in 2010 and at Kunsthalle Basel in 2013. Numerous solo screenings at the Anthology Film Archives in New York. Numerous group exhibitions, including the 5th Berlin Biennial in 2008 and the 2014 Whitney Biennial. Participates in Documenta 14 in 2017.

Michel Auder, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

Since moving to New York in the 1960s and becoming part of the scene centred on Andy Warhol’s Factory, Michel Auder has been a ‘partial observer’ of metropolitan life in its splendour and squalor. In quantum physics, this term denotes that observation (usually by an apparatus) becomes indistinguishable from what is being perceived, but also that there is no ‘total’ or ‘impartial’ observer. Auder observes life through hundreds of thousands of hours of video recordings. He shows four films: *1967, 1967/2017*, a nine-channel installation based on silent film footage; *It’s Hard to Be Down When You’re Up, 1978/2005*, shot at New York’s World Trade Center; *Voyage to the Center of the Phone Lines, 1993*, eavesdropping on intercepted mobile phone conversations; *Mixing Up the Medicine, 2015*, a free-form essay film.

Michel Auder, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

Michel Auder’s films are shown courtesy of Martos Gallery NY and Gavin Brown’s Enterprise in New York and Rome.

SIMRYN GILL

Born in Singapore in 1959. Lives in Port Dickson, Malaysia, and Sydney, Australia. Numerous solo exhibitions, notably at Tate Modern in London in 2006, at NTU Centre for Contemporary Art in Singapore in 2015 and at the Museum of Fine Arts in Ghent in 2016. Represented Australia at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013. Numerous group exhibitions, including the 12th Istanbul Biennial in 2011. Participated in Documenta 12 in 2007 and in Documenta 13 in 2012.

Simryn Gill engages with a variety of media: photography, sculpture, collections of objects, drawing, writing, typing, printing. Many of her works articulate the idea and reality of decay and regeneration. They allow her and other human agents to turn cyclical or repetitious processes into engines of free will and creation, hinting at a state ‘beyond entropy’. *Let Them Eat Potatoes, 2015*, is an installation of multiple potato-prints. In the photographic series *My Own Private Angkor, 2007–2009*, Gill documented the compositions of glass plates left behind by people stealing aluminium window frames in a deserted housing estate in her hometown. For *Windows, 2011/2017*, she turned her camera at the sky outside the unglazed windows.

My Own Private Angkor, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

My Own Private Angkor is show courtesy of Tracy Williams, Ltd. in New York. *Windows* and *Let Them Eat Potatoes* are shown courtesy of Utopia Art Sydney.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

Just as collapse may be both the destruction of a culture or the seed for new growth, a disciplined society may be organised either from the top down, with ideology as an instrument of control, or from the bottom up, with ideology as common ground. The futurist and the artists in this segment interpret discipline by narrating possible protocols for consumption in a future disciplined society (Mei-Mei Song) or by submitting themselves to highly disciplined working protocols involving scripted, repetitive painting tasks (Kasper Bosmans) or the transformation of humble materials and surfaces, via high-definition digital imaging and computerised jacquard looms, into elaborate and luxurious woven images (Miriam Bäckström).

MEI-MEI SONG

Born in Taipei, Taiwan, in 1966. Lives in Taipei. Assistant Professor at the Graduate Institute of Futures Studies, Tamkang University, Taipei. A highly accomplished futures educator with a doctorate in Education from Columbia University, New York, Professor Song specialises in the future of education and of globalisation. She has published widely on topics such as images of the future, sustainability in universities or incorporating futures thinking into higher education. She is devoted to the convergence of foresight with other disciplines such as engineering, architecture and city planning to create beneficial futures for Taiwan — and all of humanity. Professor Song is also the director of her university’s Center for Futures Intelligence and Research (C-FAR).

Mei-Mei Song, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

The true-cost economy concept that is the basis for Professor Song’s presentation of a future technology-assisted pricing system for consumer goods is a well-researched disciplined scenario. The items for sale are valued in euros and Carbon Footprint Points, calculated according to consumer profiles. Professor Song’s *Time Machine, 2017*, is an adaptation of her workshop game with the same title. It follows the instruction of ‘looking back before looking forward’ that is a common starting point for many futures exercises. The role-play is meant to empower participants, letting them look from the past at a future they already know (i.e. the present).

Mei-Mei Song, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

Graphic design by Duanduan Hsieh and Pieter Boels.

MIRIAM BÄCKSTRÖM

Born in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1967. Lives in Stockholm. Numerous solo exhibitions, notably at the Museum for Contemporary Art Basel in 2004, at Lunds konsthall, Sweden, in 2012 and at Extra City in Antwerp in 2014. Numerous group exhibitions, including the 48th Venice Biennale in 1999. Represented Sweden at the 51st Venice Biennale in 2005. Visiting Professor at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm in 2009–2012.

Miriam Bäckström, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

Miriam Bäckström’s oeuvre combines and transcends photography and video, theatrical writing and performance, objects and installation. She uses the term ‘character’ — the roles that we play and that play us, the qualities we perceive in people and things — as a precision tool for disassembling and reassembling image, language and behaviour. She seeks to create new behaviour, a new understanding of language, an image never before seen. The tapestries of the *New Enter Image* series, 2016–ongoing, articulate a long-standing interest of hers: the impossibility of central perspective in today’s and tomorrow’s digital reality. ‘We are no longer looking at images; we are inside them. We have become the image and possibly we perceive our surroundings from the perspective of the image.’

Miriam Bäckström, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

We thank Iaspis, the Swedish Arts Grants Committee, Marabouparken konsthall in Sundyberg, Sweden, and Kvadrat for supporting Miriam Bäckström’s production. *New Enter Image* is shown courtesy of Galería Elba Benitez in Madrid.

KASPER BOSMANS

Born in Lommel, Belgium, in 1990. Lives in Brussels. Solo exhibitions at S.M.A.K. in Ghent, Witte de With Centre for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam, Marc Foxx Gallery in Los Angeles and Gladstone Gallery in Brussels, all in 2016. Numerous group exhibitions. Participates in the 1st Kathmandu Triennial in 2017.

Kasper Bosmans’s paintings, objects and installations demonstrate that visual refinement and precision don’t have to be enemies of their conceptual counterparts. The three new works for this exhibition foreground his preference for the pictogrammatic as a mode of action. In *Legend: A Temporary Futures Institute, 2016*, and in *The Four Futures Frieze, 2017*, executed on the walls of a skylight, he offers a tongue-in-cheek translation of Jim Dator’s ‘four futures’ into a language of painting that is simultaneously visible and readable. *Discipline, 2017*, is a sensuous coral pink gradient ceiling painting that doubles as a chromatic rendering of disciplined thought. Bosmans also designed the custom-made furniture for ‘A Temporary Futures Institute’ in collaboration with Anders Kreuger.

Kasper Bosmans, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

Legend: A Temporary Futures Institute and *The Four Futures Frieze* are shown courtesy of Gladstone Gallery, New York/Brussels, which also supported the production of the furniture. *Discipline* is the artist’s donation to the M HKA collection.

TRANSFORMATION

Transformation, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

It is befitting that most people’s ‘favourite’ among the four futures should signify the perhaps most diverse part of this exhibition. Transformation is a dynamic process, with a hopeful ring to it, but its results are singularly unpredictable, especially if we consider the transformative interaction between men and machines that has been going on for at least 250 years. This segment accommodates both ‘high-tech’ and ‘low-tech’ approaches to such themes: our increasingly absurd symbiosis with information systems (Stuart Candy, Guan Xiao) or the nearly forgotten arts of pen-and-paper calculation or schematic drawing as a technique of the self (Jean Katambayi Mukendi).

STUART CANDY

Born in Adelaide, Australia, in 1980. Lives in Toronto and Chicago. A professional futurist and experience designer, Dr. Stuart Candy is currently the William Bronson and Grayce Slovet Mitchell Visiting Professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a tenure-track faculty member of the world’s first foresight and design program, at OCAD University, Toronto. Professor Candy is Director of Situation Lab, and his experiential futures work has appeared in museums, festivals, conferences, and city streets, on the Discovery Channel, and in the pages of *The Economist* and *Wired*.

Stuart Candy, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

A museum of contemporary art, where every presentation is supposed to be unique and where subverting expectations is almost standard practice, is a particularly challenging environment for experiential futures. They have the greatest effect in ordinary present-day settings where they are revealed and understood only after the unexpected encounter has taken place. Professor Candy’s *NurturePod, 2017*, has all the trimmings and trappings of commercial branded design. It takes the idea of transformation in a near future to a doubtful extreme, just like so many tech-optimist advocates of transformation do.

GUAN XIAO

Guan Xiao, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

Born in Chongqing Province, China, in 1983. Lives in Beijing. Numerous solo exhibitions, notably at Jeu de Paume in Paris, at ICA in London and at K11 Art Foundation in Shanghai, all in 2016. Numerous group exhibitions, including ‘Don’t You Know Who I Am? Art After Identity Politics’ at M HKA in 2014. Participated in the 9th Berlin Biennial in 2016 and the 2015 Triennial at the New Museum in New York. Participates in the 57th Venice Biennale in 2017.

Guan Xiao, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

Guan Xiao’s videos, sculptural objects and installations — eerily thingly, ethereally witty — have earned her a favourable position among her generation of artists worldwide. While she doesn’t actively resist being identified with so-called post-internet art, she is building a sustainably irreverent aesthetic of her own from within this of-the-moment paradigm, always on the cusp of transforming itself out of existence. While based on footage from a feverish, stormy, robotic today, the video triptych *DengueDengueDengue, 2017*, comes across as a meditation on panchronic existence, in which the past, present and future share the same space-time — and attack us simultaneously. Both the title and the audio-visual montage employ Guan Xiao’s favoured method of pinning down the abstract with the demonstratively concrete.

DengueDengueDengue is shown courtesy of Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler in Berlin.

JEAN KATAMBAYI MUKENDI

Born in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, in 1974. Lives in Lubumbashi. Solo exhibitions at trampoline in Antwerp and Enough Room for Space in Brussels in 2016, and at Stroom in The Hague in 2017. Numerous group exhibitions, notably the 11th Dak’Art biennial in Dakar in 2014, the 12th Habana Biennial and the 4th Lubumbashi Biennale, both in 2015. Represented in the M HKA collection.

Jean Katambayi Mukendi, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

Trained in science and engineering, Jean Katambayi Mukendi tends to conjure up a world of machinic objects and execute them in cardboard and coloured paper, with or without moving parts. The diagrammatic — thought-image or image-thought — is another powerful stream in his work, foregrounded in the installation *Inertia, 2017*. Its three parts are titled *The Tree, The Chariot* and *The Class*. The cardboard is still there, but as surface and vehicle for image and text. Katambayi Mukendi speaks of the pressure to read and write with ever-greater speed, so as not to be left behind by ‘progress’. Yet the tree, as a seemingly stationary bundle of relations and communications channelling transformative energy, is his central metaphor. ‘Every tree responds with its roots — also the mobile inverted tree, because its roots are situated in the brain.’

Jean Katambayi Mukendi, 2017, 100x100cm, oil on canvas

We thank Agence Future for supporting Jean Katambayi Mukendi’s production. *Inertia* is shown courtesy of trampoline in Antwerp.