

If This Then That

15/04/2022 - 03/05/2022

Shervin Kianersi Haghighi & Various Artists

If This Then That is a solo exhibition by Shervin Kianersi Haghighi (Shiraz, 1981), curated by the Various Artists collective (Rio de Janeiro, 1993). The exhibition is part of a long-term invitational project called Q&A, a series of collaborations initiated by Various Artists with fellow artists active in different fields of the art world.*

Shervin Kianersi Haghighi deconstructs works by Trudo Engels (Roeselare, 1962 - Dubrovnik, 2009) from the 1980s and 1990s by applying a series of actions that are part of her performative language.

When Shervin Kianersi Haghighi proposed to performatively “destroy” the early/archived works of Trudo Engels, Various Artists saw the opportunity to finally and definitively draw a line in the sand of the past. Although some of Engels’ works predicted the dawn of a fragmented future, hinting at multiple accounts with Drib-, Martaque- and Omandichana-like pieces, the singularity was on the verge of extinction.

In January 1993 in Rio de Janeiro, Cildo Meireles said to Trudo Engels: “What are you doing in the art world, heterosexual, white, male, European? Soon there will be no demand for you people. Get out!” Since then, the idea of a single, vertically oriented artist became more or less unattractive. Over the decade that followed, the fragmentation of “the artist” took root, the entity collapsed, and eventually resulted in the collective we now know as Various Artists.

The era of Western white male domination in art finally has come to an end, but many players in the art market have not received the memo. These are great times for WWM artists to reinvent themselves, to open up, make room for others and work collaboratively.

Shervin Kianersi Haghighi’s actions are poetically provocative, constantly infecting (or inspiring) V.A. to be the conceptual collective they are. Her performances question our Western attitude towards the preservation and archiving of contemporary art with its objectification of concepts and its desire to possess ideas. No idea is yours, no idea is safe! “Keep Cutting!”

Name Surname for Various Artists, Brussels 2022.

* previous Q&As:

i, Mango Discipline with Cildo Meireles, 2015

r, Metarealism with Dirk De Vos, 2020

z, Human Mathematics with Sarah Cale, 2021

future Q&As:

b, with Steven Jouwersma, 2022

D, with Alexandra Dementieva, 2022

- 1 Trudo Engels, *Drop Drop*, 1998
11.4 x 15.6 cm, pencil on envelope
- 2 Trudo Engels, *Vn d Tbl*, 1986
9.2 x 11.7 cm, collage
- 3 Trudo Engels, *O*, 1991
21 x 29.7 cm, typewriter on paper
- 4 Trudo Engels, *Barney (study)*, 1993
21 x 27.5 cm, pencil on paper, mounted on magazine
- 5 Trudo Engels, *The first and the last five*, 1987
21 x 29.7 cm, pen on paper
- 6 Trudo Engels, *Untitled*, 1997
8 x 11 cm, patch on paper
- 7 Trudo Engels, *Dancing*, 1985
21 x 29.7 cm, pen on paper
- 8 Trudo Engels, *innumerat*, 1999
21 x 29.7 cm, ink on paper
- 9 Trudo Engels, *TdF*, 1991
21 x 29.7 cm, typewriter on paper
- 10 Trudo Engels, *Pedestrian Vomit Show*, 1989
4x (21 x 29.7) cm, typewriter on paper
- 11 Trudo Engels, *Untitled*, 1998
22.7 x 43.7 cm, pencil on paper
- 12 Trudo Engels, *Condition*, 1997
42 x 29.7 cm, pencil on paper,
- 13 Trudo Engels, *Je serai votre femme*, 1985
27.4 x 34 cm, pencil and pen on paper
- 14 Trudo Engels, *Radiatie negatief*, 1983
48.5 x 31 cm, felt-tip pen on paper
- 15 Trudo Engels, *Untitled*, 1988
84 x 117 cm, ink on tracing paper
- 16 Trudo Engels, *Drift*, 1987
26 x 33.5 cm, acrylic on score
- 17 Trudo Engels, *Deviation*, 1989
21 x 29.7 cm, pencil and pen on paper
- 18 Trudo Engels, *Snap Stem*, 1993
136 x 100 cm, pencil and tape on paper
- 19 Trudo Engels, *Klank Schema*, 1987
64.5 x 117 cm, ink on tracing paper
- 20 Trudo Engels, *Untitled*, 1995
73.3 x 57 cm, dust on paper
- 21 Trudo Engels, *210 Niveaus*, 1991
70 x 97 cm, pencil on paper
- 22 Trudo Engels, *Partituur*, 1993
45.5 x 81 cm, carbon
- 23 Trudo Engels, *Untitled*, 1986
10.3 x 16.2 cm, felt-tip pen on paper
- 24 Trudo Engels, *Carmella Giansoldati (score)*, 1992
210 x 85 cm, pencil on tracing paper
- 25 Trudo Engels, *Ring 13 (study)*, 1994
108 x 96 cm, pencil on pattern paper
- 26 Trudo Engels, *Partituur*, 1991
26 x 19.7 cm, acrylic on bookfragments
- 27 Trudo Engels, *Klaprozen*, 1998
15 x 20.5 cm, poppies mounted on paper
- 28 Trudo Engels, *Dog/Fox*, 1991
29.7 x 42 cm, annual report cover
- 29 Trudo Engels, *Math Pig*, 1991
24 x 32 cm, dance carpet
- 30 Trudo Engels, *The Anniversary*, 1987
21 x 29.7 cm, photocopy
- 31 Trudo Engels, *Les Artistes du Coq*, 1992
21 x 29.7 cm, oilpaint on paper
- 32 Trudo Engels, *Otto 151*, 1993
21 x 29.7 cm, alcohol pen on paper
- 33 Trudo Engels, *Ars Musica*, 1991
31.6 x 43 cm, pen on newspaper
- 34 Trudo Engels, *non own old*, 1985
21 x 29.7 cm, pen on paper

- 35 Trudo Engels, *Bard Codes*, 1994
36 x 40 x 120, books, ink, pencil

- 36 Trudo Engels, *kuba-octaëder*, 1995
29.7 x 42 cm, pencil on paper

- 37 Trudo Engels, *Collectors 1*, 1990
29.7 x 42 cm, collage and inkjet on paper

- 38 Trudo Engels, *Martaque*, 1998
42 x 29.7 cm, computerdrawing

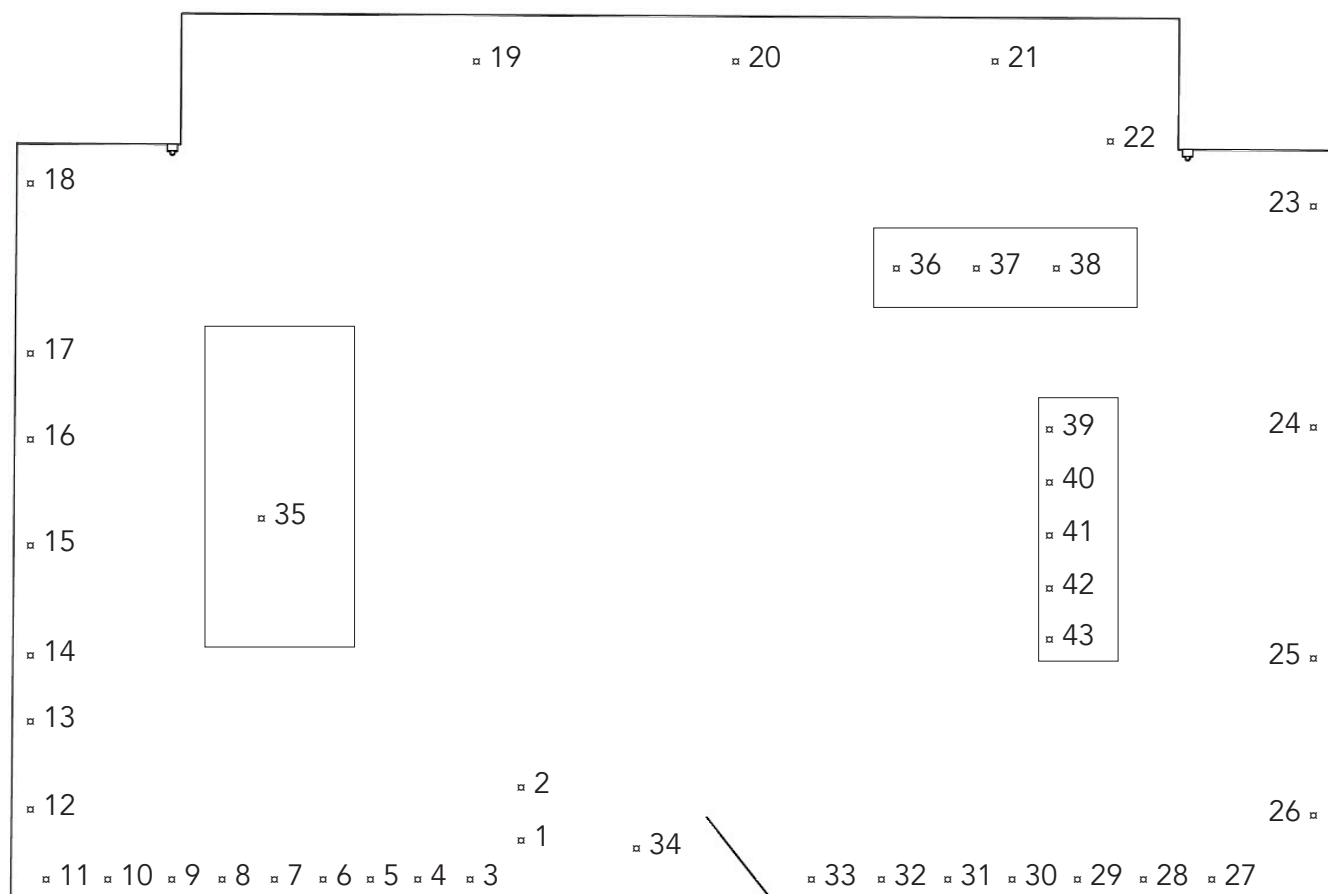
- 39 Trudo Engels, *Barney (study)*, 1993
21 x 27.5 cm, pencil on paper, mounted on magazine

- 40 Trudo Engels, *'s levens nevels*, 1989
29.5 x 27.5 cm, typewriter on paper

- 41 Trudo Engels, *French lessons*, 1991
21 x 29.7 cm, pen on photocopy

- 42 Trudo Engels, *iiiiioioioio*, 1986
21 x 29.7 cm, ink on paper

- 43 Trudo Engels, *Kaartspel*, 1989
27.5 x 43.3 cm, collage



One way to activate one's timeline's works is to activate one's archive. A physical archive is wed to a linear timeline. Its ordered character brings us from the past into the present, following consecutive stepping stones through linear time.

Activating one's physical archive by doing actions to deconstruct them, allowing both artist and visitors to re-frame the timeline. Time loses its linear character and becomes non-linear when bouncing back and forth through a maze of documents and dates that have been deprived of the physical quality of aging.

Framing is a question of constantly reframing one thing into another so that with each subsequent reframing, the thing becomes something new.

Actions can deploy the framing archive to create new multi-layered fictions. The fictions that we create give shape to new realities, new stories. Yet the new fictional stories become a way to help the other hidden stories stay alive by being retold.

Shervin Kianersi Haghighi, Brussels, 2022.

SET OF ACTIONS: executed during the opening of If This Then That.

While Various Artists gave an introduction to each of Trudo Engels' works, Shervin Kianersi Haghighi started cutting up the artworks in an intuitive order. Each time she made use of another pair of scissors.

The order of these actions on the works, the duration of each action, and the number of pieces that were cut during the action were noted and recorded.

The art-chive of Trudo Engels was revisited, new stories were created, and in turn collected by the visitors who could pick up pieces of the works that fell on the floor during the performance. The pieces were carefully packed and signed by both artists.