

kunsthal

extra
city



BREACH!

“It’s a little like this: there are lines in the air next to your head, next to your glance zones for the detention of your eyes, your smell, your taste, that is to say you’re going around with your limits outside and you can’t get beyond that limit when you think you’ve caught anything fully, just like an iceberg the thing has a small piece outside and shows it to you, and the enormous rest of it is beyond your limits and that’s why the Titanic went down.”

Julio Cortázar, ‘Hopscotch’

“It’s not just us keeping them apart. It’s everyone in Beszel and everyone in Ul Qoma. Every minute, every day. We’re only the last ditch; it’s everyone in the cities who does most of the work. That’s why unseeing and unsensing are so vital. No one can admit it doesn’t work. So if you don’t admit it, it does. But if you breach, even if it’s not your fault, for more than the shortest time... you can’t come back from that.”

China Miéville, ‘The City & the City’

‘Breach!’ 25.05 – 01.07.2018

Group exhibition and public programme with contributions by Daan Gielis, Jan Hoeft, David Horvitz, katze und krieg with Clark Beaumont, Katrin Kamrau, Thea Miklowski & Kim Woliks, Mateusz Okoński, Ilona Roesli, Jakub Skoczek, Michiel Vandeveld and various authors.

Curated by Aneta Rostkowska & Jakub Woynarowski

The exhibition ‘Breach!’ is inspired by China Miéville’s novel ‘The City & the City’ (2009). The book, a captivating urban fantasy, tells the story of two cities – Beszel and Ul Qoma – that occupy the exact same space, but remain separate entities with each having its own government, laws, history and traditions. The inhabitants of Beszel and Ul Qoma speak different languages, adhere to different habits and wear different types of clothing. Through all of that as well as a variety of other traits, they signal their belonging to one city or the other. Thanks to years of training – which in this case means learning to “unsee” or “unhear” anything happening in the other city – the people of Beszel and Ul Qoma are able to completely avoid noticing each other. The act of ignoring this separation – intentionally noticing a person or object belonging to the other city, so-called “breaching” – is a severely punished crime.

Although the setting of ‘The City & the City’ seems to be at first glance a purely fictional construct, after a closer examination it reveals itself as a compelling allegory of contemporary city life. Like the citizens of

Beszél and Ul Qoma, we make and remake the cities around us without realising what we leave out of the picture. Constantly living in a state of a mild dissociation we omit the elements of the urban environment that do not fit into our social, conceptual and sensual apparatus. Walking anywhere in our towns is like undergoing a master class in unseeing – in relation to neighbours, homeless people, inhabitants of a different class or cultural background. The divisions enforced by education, economy or politics become every bit as real as actual physical walls. As a result each city consists in fact of several other cities whose inhabitants, although very close to one another, rarely meet and if the encounter happens, its scope is very limited, making understanding somebody else's life very difficult. Isolationism, reinforced by the ideology of pure, clearly delineated identities, creates a culture of hostility, marginalisation and oppression.

How to offer a meaningful resistance to this state of affairs? Is there a way of capturing some more of "the enormous rest" of the iceberg so that the Titanic eventually doesn't go down (Cortázar)? In this exhibition Miéville's "breaching" becomes a narrative instrument helping us to recognise, practise and reflect on various techniques of "opening up" towards the barely experienceable "unknown" – reaching out for it, partly succeeding, mostly failing, being invited to speculate about the unseen rest and accepting the fact that some things will never be fully understood. What remains is living with a consciousness that the whole (for example somebody else's culture or religion) will never be fully given. Selected cases of transgression,

appropriation, contamination and violation of numeric, geographical, conceptual and sensual limits presented here are driven by curiosity, fascination, desire and longing to become someone/something else, ultimately getting at a complex, hybrid and uncategorizable identity.

A number of artworks in the exhibition are of scattered nature; having multiple elements or being of vast scale, they are sometimes not easily discerned from other objects in the gallery, making it impossible for the visitors to experience them in full. Some of the works even “breach” each other, creating a sort of fungal or rhizome-like structure that does not allow a delineation of the borders between them.

Together with the artists whose works are presented in the exhibition, we want to invite you to breach with us, to cross over the threshold into a city in which life goes beyond what is usual and expected, a place full of fascinating intercultural encounters, clashes and influences – an “Extra City”. Breach!

Aneta Rostkowska & Jakub Woynarowski

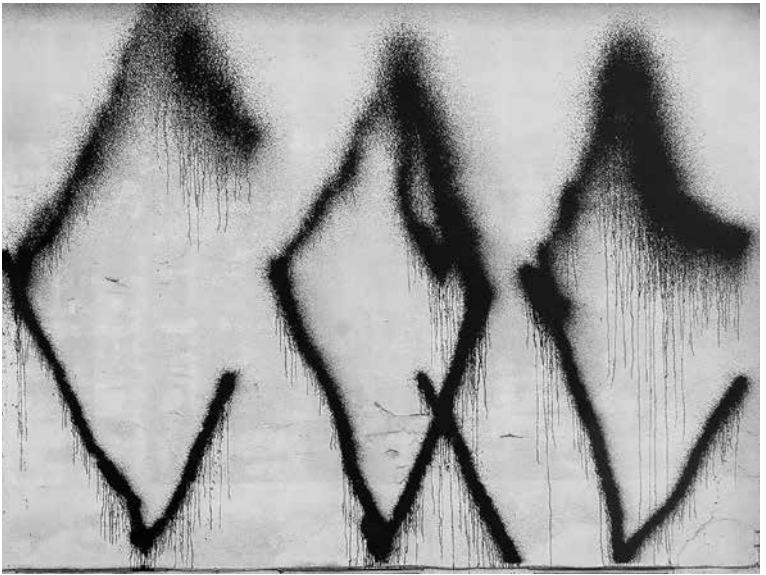
↳ THIS BROCHURE FOLLOWS THE ROUTE THROUGH THE EXHIBITION. ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES THE ARTISTS HAVE BEEN NUMBERED; THESE NUMBERS CORRESPOND TO THOSE ON THE EXHIBITION LABELS.

1. Daan Gielis

'CQC' (Shoot To Thrill series v.II), (2015)

“Cause I’m the one who’s gonna make you burn
I’m gonna take you down – down, down, down
So don’t you fool around
I’m gonna pull it, pull it, pull the trigger
Shoot to thrill, play to kill [...]
I’m like evil, I get under your skin
Just like a bomb that’s ready to blow”
(AC/DC, ‘Shoot To Thrill’)

The exhibition starts with the ultimate act of breaching – the elegant façade of Kunsthal Extra City has been violated in a territorial gesture typical of the graffiti scene. This time however the territory is marked by an artist as if he wants to signal that the art space ultimately belongs to the city and the artists that live there. The work belongs to the ‘Shoot To Thrill’ series and consequently its font recalls the logo of famously baffling heavy metal band AC/DC. It reminds us of the transgressive and untameable power of art, a source of the eternal tension between it and its institutionalised parergon. The letters ‘CQC’ probably stand for “C’est Que C’est” (“It is what it is”), which inevitably leads to Frank Stella’s famous “What you see is what you see”, a call for “tautological seeing” (Georges Didi-Huberman), in which we take things as they are, not perceiving them as a representation of anything. Advocated by minimal art, it is an invitation to NOTICE what is seen, which is the materiality of art itself, its sensual substance. In the case of Kunsthal Extra City



it is the building with its unique history of being a former public laundry.

On the other hand the 'CQC' looks like a brand, a name of a company, which makes us think of the contemporary art world as a tool of the neoliberal economy, with all its limited concepts of the artist as a productive, tamed and obedient entrepreneur. In the end even the most rebellious artworks become commodities, products in the commercial or institutional markets. We are left with a paradox, so yes, maybe we shouldn't expect too much from art in the end, after all "it is what it is"...

The work of Daan Gielis is marked by contradictions. On one side he operates an institutional critique that deals with systems and its ways of working. On the other side he is highly aware of his own position within the same processes he criticises, a position which he takes as a starting point for his works. Therefore, his practice could be described as a double-edged sword.

2. David Horvitz

'Exchanging Breaths with Plants', (2013, 2018)

In 2013, as a part of his project 'Fifty-Five Honey Locust Trees', in which he germinated honey locust seeds from Zuccotti Park in New York (where protesters of the Occupy Wall Street movement gathered), David Horvitz, together with a group of people he invited to his studio, exchanged breaths with a plant (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zen4OnqK3rA>). During this event, for 3 minutes and 5 seconds he breathed in the oxygen produced by the honey locust seedling, in exchange providing it with the air he breathed out. The meditative, Zen-like performance created a feeling of continuity between humans and plants. In 2018 at Kunsthal Extra City he invites the visitors of the Extra Fika Café to do the same with plants carefully placed there. In his view plants have a specific temporality, bearing witness to what's happening around them. He says: "The slowness of their pace is not subject to the world of the instantaneous and the immediate that we live in." Visitors of the exhibition 'Breach!' become performers in his artwork which enables them to experience a non-human temporality. The artwork in the Extra Fika Café will grow slowly, "memorising" its surroundings and becoming a sort of living archive. Its borders spread as the breathed-in and breathed-out particles move around, "breaching" the environment.



David Horvitz is an artist currently based in Los Angeles. He works in a variety of media, including photography, video, internet, publications, and watercolour. His work is inspired by such artists like Bas Jan Ader and On Kawara. In 2016, he hired a pickpocket to place sculptures in the pockets of attendees of the annual Frieze Art Fair.

3. Jan Hoelt

'The space we live in', (2018)

Specifically for the exhibition 'Breach!', Jan Hoelt has developed an installation consisting of hanging plastic curtains, an opened window and flows of air. The installation has a contradictory nature as the artist, on the one hand, has opened the window in the first floor to allow for an exchange of air between the outside and the inside; and on the other hand, he has placed curtains downstairs which limit the intensity of the flow of air so that the temperature in the café doesn't decrease. Plain PVC is a rigid material that gets its flexible properties only through the addition of a phthalate plasticiser. In the case of the curtain it is Bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate, or DEHP for short, which is a widely used organic compound that is unfortunately also carcinogenic and teratogenic. When in contact with the air, the curtains' plasticised PVC slowly emits the toxic DEHP into the surroundings and gradually loses its flexibility. Eventually because of its rigidity it will have to be removed. The open window creates a draught that pulls the air from the café through the slats of the curtain exposing it to more air, speeding up the process. The simple gesture of opening a window creates a situation in which the border of the exhibition space will slowly disintegrate.

Jan Hoelt is an artist based in Cologne. In his projects he analyses contemporary global society using conceptual photography, video, and public space interventions. He graduated from the Academy of Media Arts Cologne and the Jan Van Eyck Academie in Maastricht.



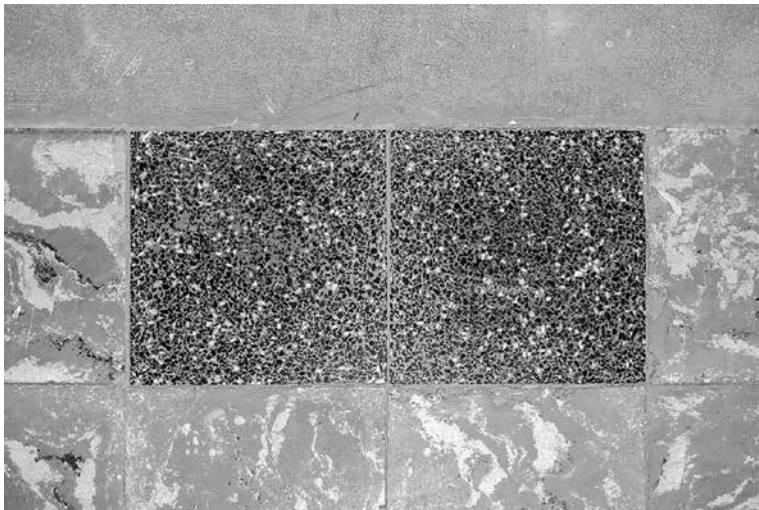
4. Various authors

'Building of Kunsthal Extra City', (1933–now)

'Building of Kunsthal Extra City' is the oldest artwork in the exhibition and the one with the greatest number of authors, of which many unfortunately cannot be identified. It is unclear how exactly each of them contributed to the work. The artwork consists of the building together with its interior (designed by Charles Dupont); it is a rare case of materialised paradox: the public laundry of the brothers Goossens, a place that aimed to make clean, purify, disinfect, sterilise, ultimately ends up in a state of decay, stained with the marks of passing time, random renovations, damaged floor tiles etc.

It is obvious that at some point the users of the building (probably the directors and curators of Extra City) dropped the idea of keeping it in a perfect state or renovating in a consistent way and decided to cherish the richness of the stains and marks and even support it through deliberately visible repairs. It's like hundreds of Jackson Pollocks, Mark Rothkos, Yayoi Kusamas, Carl Andres or Dan Flavins IN ONE. A perfect feast for an extravagant mind inviting you to delve in the millions of lines, imprints, scars and spots and invent your own artworks, limited only by the scope of your imagination.

Isn't this old, wrecked public laundry a wonderful setting for an art institution? Especially an art space whose essence is determined by a close relation to its surroundings and what's happening there, one that rejects the rhetoric of purity present in the traditional white



cube of contemporary art? This rhetoric consists of a claim for a purified void-like space, created through persistent effort of cleaning alien elements, iconoclastic gestures and rational analysis. It is based on constant suppression of sensuality, similar to the space of a Protestant church. At the same time however all this effort faces a resistance: it is clear that the ideal of purity is not possible to achieve and may even be undesirable or dangerous. The impure element stubbornly remains part of the space. In the same way the desire to keep the autonomy of the space of contemporary art, the effort to isolate it from other fields of society – politics, social life etc. – accompanied by self-referential modes of reflection, is constantly questioned and undermined.

5. Kris Kimpe

'Structures' ('Structure A', 'Structure B', 'Structure C', 'Structure D', 'Structure E', 'Structure F', 'Structure G'), (2018)

Kris Kimpe's 'Structures' series consists of seven architectural MDF modules acting as spatial enclaves, separated from the exhibition space. Typical MDF has a hard, flat, smooth surface and does not contain knots or rings, making it more uniform than natural wood. However, behind the illusion of a hermetically sealed form, one can find the impure construction full of crevices and cracks: objects do not have tops or bottoms, and structural joints of individual boards are not masked in any way. Although Kimpe sometimes violates the monolithism of his "structures" by covering their surfaces with sterile white areas, imitating fragments of typical "white cube" gallery space, this only produces greater contrast and emphasises the roughness of the main structures. The intended fate of these impractical white screens, eventually accumulating dirt and traces left by the visitors (as in the case of 'Structure A'), allows the superiority of sensual matter to be exposed over the rigorous discourse of the white cube.

The location of some "structures" in the middle of connecting passages causes a disturbance to visitors' natural circulation, thus forcing them to perform a specific "choreography" – in this way viewers become executors of an architectural performance. Particular

importance should be attached in this context to 'Structure G', which encourages visitors to follow a spiral trajectory – its target point is the chamber hidden in the middle of the module (it is the only “structure” whose interior has been made available to visitors).



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Kris Kimpe is an architect mainly working within visual arts contexts.

6. Mateusz Okoński

'Alea lacta Est', (2012/2016/2018)

Jakub Skoczek

'Gmerk ' ('House Mark'), (2012/2016/2018)

Centre for Contemporary Art Wawel Castle is an art institution in Kraków that parasites on another institution – Wawel Royal Castle. As a very conservative, Catholic, ideologically monolithic museum, Wawel almost never allows any contemporary art into its spaces. Challenging that fact, CCA Wawel Castle invites artists to claim authorship over selected elements of the Castle and appropriate them through narratives, storytelling and anti-documentation. One of the first acquisitions in the collection were the artworks by Jakub Skoczek and Mateusz Okoński.

Jakub Skoczek accepted employment as a worker during the conservation process of Wawel's defensive walls. Pretending that he's restoring the bricks, he actually creatively "destroyed" them by engraving his own signs, similar to existing medieval house marks.

Mateusz Okoński's project focussed on the bones of Pleistocene creatures hanging on a chain in front of the entrance to Wawel Cathedral. It is believed that the world will come to an end when the bones fall to the ground. During the conservation of the bones, they were temporarily replaced by replicas, created by Okoński, who additionally (on the side of

the bones not visible from below) engraved on them Julius Caesar's famous phrase: "Alea iacta est" ("The die is cast"), which could be interpreted to mean "The bones fell", and traditionally means that some events have passed a point of no return. In this way Okoński organised a secret exhibition of his own artwork on Wawel Hill and marked a new stage in the history of the Castle with artists starting to appropriate it in an undisclosed way.

Both artists carefully collected all the dust left over from engraving the inscriptions. In 2016 they accepted Jakub Woynarowski's idea of mixing these remains and creating a new "negative" artwork, which was presented during the exhibition 'Please, Come Closer!' at de Appel Arts Centre in Amsterdam. Distributed over the entire area of Extra City, this Duchampian "dust farm"/"dust breeding" can be perceived both as two condensed and at the same time vastly spread artworks. The work gradually violates all possible borders imperceptibly dispersing itself in the city space.

Mateusz Okoński is a sculptor, collector, curator and exhibition designer based in Kraków.

Jakub Skoczek is an artist and curator working at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków.

In collaboration with CCA Wawel Castle





7. Linah Dalifa, Pieterjan Ginckels, Hamza Halloubi, Ermias Kifleyesus, Jaha Koo, Mashid Mohadjerin, Radouan Mriziga, Ogutu Muraya, Amanda Piña, Aneta Rostkowska & Jakub Woynarowski, Myriam Van Imschoot, Arkadi Zaides, Oliver Zahn & Julian Warner, convened by Michiel Vandevelde

'Eating Each Other. On the dynamics of reappropriation', (2018)



Many Western-European cities have become melting pots of different minority cultures. In 2018, Antwerp will for the first time have more residents with a migrant background than it will have native Belgian residents. This will make it a so-called “majority-minority city”, a city in which the majority is made up of a wide range of minorities. As such, the city will no longer be characterised by a distinct ethnic, religious and cultural homogeneity.

In light of this, the significance of the term “citizenship” comes into question. The notion of “citizenship” evokes associations with values such as democracy, rights and freedom of expression and religion. These values are often seen as the result of a long tradition within Western, Euro-American thought. In these post-colonial times, in which Western society is becoming markedly more diverse, to look at “citizenship” from a Western perspective is no longer a valid approach.

For example, in order to become “real” citizens of their adopted country, newcomers are expected to accept “Enlightened thinking” and Western, liberal values, such as openness and freedom. However, “openness” and “freedom” have a limited scope: they are usually the preserve of those who comply with Western norms. Those who deviate from these norms are either “swallowed up” by liberal ideology or rejected and marginalised.

'Eating Each Other' looks at the strategy of reappropriation. The project is inspired by the Manifesto Antropófago ('Cannibalist Manifesto') written by Brazilian poet and theorist Oswald de Andrade in 1928. In this poetic text, de Andrade proposes to cannibalise a dominant culture by eating it, digesting it and excreting it in an entirely new form.

This reappropriation enables people to create a space that they recognise as their own. New patterns of thought and behaviour are blended with their own knowledge, customs and rituals. This serves as a means of relieving powerlessness with respect to dominant structures: the possibility is created to absorb, appropriate and and potentially change.

Processes of reappropriation reveal an interesting power dynamic. They are simultaneously a tool of domination and a means of resisting domination. It is this dynamic that 'Eating Each Other' seeks to reflect. The "cannibalistic" process is presented through artworks that themselves are proposals for reappropriation, as well as through groups of works that mutually reappropriate in various ways.

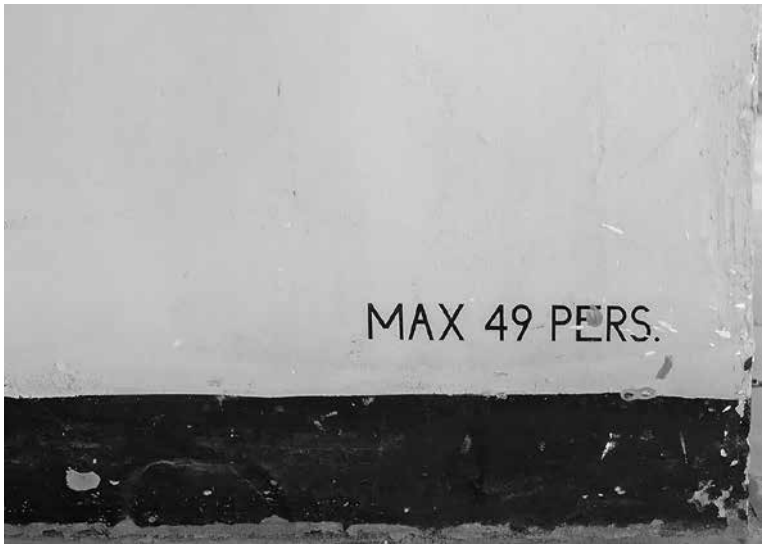
The question remains: who is eating and who is eaten?

Michiel Vandevælde studied dance and choreography at P.A.R.T.S., Brussels. He is active as a choreographer, curator, writer and editor. He is a member of the artistic team of Kunsthal Extra City (together with Antonia Alampi and iliana Fokianaki, from 2017 till 2019, Antwerp, BE) and Bâtard (a festival for emerging artists and thinkers, Brussels, BE). He is involved as an editor in the Disagree. magazine, and he has written articles for Etcetera, De Witte Raaf, Rekto:Verso, Mister Motley, etc.

8. Thea Miklowski & Kim Woliks

'MAXIMUM 49 PERSONEN', (2018)

In a continuation and modification of Dunbar's Rule of 150 the artists Thea Miklowski and Kim Woliks propose their Rule of 49, which states that 49 people is at once the minimum number of people needed for a group to be considered "diverse", the maximum number of people with which one can comfortably share the same space, and the ideal number of people for enhancing creativity and productivity. They came to this number via social experiments that they have conducted over the past several years on human subjects. It just so happens to coincide perfectly with capacity rules for small establishments. The artists hope that soon their research will catch on and cities will encourage people to live, work, and spend their leisure time in groups of 49. Miklowski and Woliks have themselves founded the very first Group of 49: they and 47 other people have begun to live out the experiment. During the exhibition they will be visiting the Kunsthall to demonstrate their lifestyle during a workshop happening in the enclosed space on the first floor. It is however limited to 49 people, and is therefore closed to any other participants. The Group of 49 as a work, while it is being presented in the gallery space, cannot fully take on its intended form as every visitor to the Kunsthall distorts the work, causing the group to exceed the limit of 49. In this way 'MAXIMUM 49 PERSONEN' becomes like Schrödinger's cat, making us reflect upon the arbitrariness of ways of "belonging" and the paradox of



affinities and incongruities involved in building community.

Kim Woliks is a social scientist and artist whose work focusses on the psychology of collaborative processes. Recently she has worked with the art collective Desearch Reapartment. Thea Miklowski is an artist, editor, and translator. Through performance, video, and public interventions she triggers interaction with audience and community; explores the physicality of the body; and challenges and critiques social and political structures in the public realm.

9. Katrin Kamrau, Ilona Roesli

'Creative Guides', (2018), PERFORMANCES: 03.06, 17.06, 01.07



© Tomas Uyttendaele

What happens when the exhibition is appropriated by the exhibition guide?

The collective of performers – acting as exhibition guides – will focus on just one of the elements of 'Breach!' (the work convened by Michiel Vandeveldel), ignoring the others.

The 'Creative Guides' project is an example of "gonzo curating" – a creative practice conceived as a process of appropriation of objects by means of constructing a semi-fictional narrative around them. Gonzo curating is

an independent, rebellious and performative curatorial practice, an inventive form of challenging art institutions and established exhibition formats. The term “gonzo” refers to “gonzo journalism”, a personal-critical form of reporting where the journalist actively takes part in the story. Inspired by Hunter S. Thompson’s highly subjective but politically relevant and playful activity, gonzo curating is an attempt to reconceive curatorial practice in the times of economic and political crisis.

Ilona Roesli is a writer and lives and works in Antwerp. Her work has appeared in art platforms such as Domein voor de kunstkritiek and DansBrabant and literary magazines ‘Kluger Hans’ and ‘ZINK’.

Katrin Kamrau has a background in photography and media. She has given guided tours at Extra City since 2017.

10 katze und krieg and Clark Beaumont

'In the Company', (2017/2018)

The artist duos katze und krieg and Clark Beaumont have together developed performances* meant to enrich the workplaces of companies. Specifically for Kunsthal Extra City the artists trained the staff to execute them during the working hours. The only audience of these performances are the staff members themselves and people they work with. There is an interesting correlation between the other works in the 'Breach!' exhibition and these performances, for example 'Walk the plant' (a person in business attire pulls an office plant on rollers slowly but continuously through the workplace) corresponds with David Horvitz's 'Exchanging Breaths with Plants' or 'I hide as a symbol for all of your fears' (a person in fancy business clothes hides in the workplace) could happen in Kris Kimpé's 'Structures'. In a way the exhibition itself is breaching the offices of the art institution and the bodies of the workers.

* Performances are aimed at enriching the atmosphere of the workplace. The artists are not responsible for any possible disruptions to the staff's work that might occur. The performances are meant to be subtle interventions.

katze und krieg are two Cologne-based performance artists, Katharina Sandner and Julia Dick. Since 2007 the duo has developed performances and happenings based on daily-life observations. Sarah Clark and Nicole Beaumont are the Australian artistic collaboration Clark Beaumont, currently based in Berlin. Using performance, video and installation, their practice explores ideas and constructs surrounding identity, interpersonal relationships, intimacy and female subjectivity.

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Sofie Wuyts

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texts Aneta Rostkowska, Jakub
Woynarowski, Michiel Vandevelde
graphic design Jef Cuypers

THANKS TO

The Boards of Kunsthall Extra City and the
Extra City Council

a Eikelstraat 29, 2600 Antwerpen
o Wed-Sun, 13:00-18:00
€ FREE ENTRANCE
w extracity.org

Dear visitor,

Welcome to Kunsthal Extra City.

We exhibit art that encourages reflection on contemporary topics in today's city and seek to encourage new connections between contemporary art, artists, researchers and city residents.

As such, we are highly committed to ensuring that our communication with respect to the exhibitions is clear, by means of brochures like this, free guided tours, and so on.

In the future we aim, in so far as possible, to provide Dutch translations for any foreign-language videos and texts exhibited at Extra City.

Please don't hesitate to come to the front desk with any suggestions or questions you have regarding specific artworks or texts. You can also contact us by sending an email to info@extracity.org or by calling us on +32 3 677 16 55.

The team of Kunsthal Extra City

PUBLIC PROGRAMME 'Breach!'

- 27.05 ANTWERP ART WEEKEND Opening with performative guided tour by Aneta Rostkowska & Jakub Woynarowski
- 02.06 Performance: Radouan Mriziga
- 03.06 Guided tour on Sunday ('Creative Guides')
- 16.06 Performance: Radouan Mriziga
- 17.06 Guided tour on Sunday ('Creative Guides')
- 01.07 Guided tour on Sunday ('Creative Guides')