

**new york
stories:
twenty
years of
iscp**



Taysir Batniji, *Quiet days at the UN*, July 25, 2014, Video, 24:27 min.

International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP)

New York Stories: Twenty Years of ISCP

November 7, 2014 - January 30, 2015

Artists: Balam Bartolomé, Taysir Batniji,
Maura Biava, Christine Coenon, Jacqueline Doyen,
Patrick Hamilton, Laura Horelli, Anna Jermolaewa,
Anouk Kruithof, Kakyong Lee, Marklinger + Waerndt,
Max Pam, Bundith Phunsombatlert, Karen Elaine
Spencer, Axel Töpfer, Christoph Weber,
and Yamashita + Kobayashi

Foreword

The day-to-day activities of the International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP) does not often allow for the luxury of reflecting on how the program evolved to its current state of being. So, when we approached our alumni to commemorate the program's 20th year with an exhibition of work that had relevance to their residency in New York City, I was offered an unexpected subtext... a reconnecting to our past through a viewing of the present.

The 200-plus alumni who responded to our call for *New York Stories: Twenty Years of ISCP* gave me pause to remember their participation while in the program and then to learn about what followed. It made me contemplate their practice and to what extent ISCP played a role. Their submissions of artwork created while in the program or because of the program and the inclusion of many notes of appreciation of their tenure, were both moving and affirming of the program's value.

Furthermore, this reconnect led me to consider the many individuals who have made the program what it is: the staff and board members that have come, gone and stayed, the 450 sponsors, the hundreds of contributors and, most importantly, the 2,000 artists and curators. All have participated in placing ISCP in a Pantheon of the most prominent internationally recognized residency programs.

When ISCP was founded in 1994, there were just a handful of residency programs in the world to which artists could apply. The emergence of ISCP accounted for the third in Greater New York. Now, there are 70 and hundreds, if not thousands throughout the world. By my last count, seventeen distinct models exist. ISCP had to evolve over the years. In 1999, we included curators into our community of artists. In 2008, our move to Brooklyn allowed for many more studios, a project room and the addition of a gallery that initiated an ISCP-produced cycle of international art exhibitions rarely accessible in New York City. In 2010, we

added participatory projects, an ambitious program to provide off-site interventions with the Greater New York communities; and in 2012 we initiated *Brooklyn Commons*, a conversation open to the public which pairs an established Brooklyn-based artist with one of our own and whose practices have some overlapping connections. All these innovations co-existed with the constant refining of the program's activities for which we had gained recognition from all over the world: the visiting critic series, field trips, the Open Studios and the salons.

While ISCP has witnessed unimaginable (in 1994) growth for this program over the last 20 years, we are probably equally unaware of what the next 20 years holds. Hopefully, someday ISCP will have its own building, a secure reserve fund and thousands of appreciative alumni.

The one constant must be the valued experience for the artists' and curators' residencies.

Dennis Elliott, Founder/Director



New York City is always in flux, with people coming and going from all over the world, in an endless procession of voices and images. Once considered the international epicenter of cultural production, its inexpensive rents and endless spatial possibilities gave rise to many of the major art movements of the last half of the 20th century. Artists enjoyed being at the so-called center of the universe. During the last decades, things changed drastically. Rents skyrocketed, the cosmopolitan elite quickly gentrified neighborhoods, and artists have been pushed out of the city center. Yet, New York is still the prototypical multicultural city, attracting droves of artists who visit, stay a while and call it home even while cities such as Berlin, Istanbul, London, Mumbai and Shanghai are becoming the new art centers of the 21st century.

ISCP is part of this continuous change, yet continues New York City's original welcoming spirit: it supports artists in residence to connect with the city in meaningful ways, and to become a part of its magnetism and energy. *New York Stories: Twenty Years of ISCP* presents work by 17 ISCP alumni that responds to being in this city and incorporating that lived experience into their work. All the included works were realized in response to the city itself, and reshape how we see and understand it. These works provide an alternative visual narrative.

Several works in the exhibition begin from the personal in order to contemplate expanded global political events. Such is the case with **Taysir Batniji's** *Quiet days at the UN*, a 24-minute video consisting of a single stationary shot of New York's United Nations building. Taken across the street from the UN on July 25, 2014 during the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict—while Batniji was in residence at ISCP—the video comments on the inability and powerlessness of the UN to act in the face of thousands of civilian deaths in Gaza. The video *A Letter to Mother* by **Laura Horelli** is set in Flushing, Queens where her Finnish mother lived as a child for some years in the 1950s. In a fictional letter to her mother read by an actress voice-over in the video, Horelli wonders what her mother—who is no longer living—thought

of New York and her time there. Collapsing the present with the past, quiet and ordinary scenes of life in the outer borough are linked with questions Horelli asks about her family and the political climate of the time. *New York City June/July/August 2010* by photographer **Max Pam** is the result of his "daily scrutiny" of the New York Times over his three-month residency at ISCP. For Pam, the work "is a commentary about the world at large and how it conflates into a broadsheet newspaper. It is also a narrative of the how and why of who lives, prospers, fails and dies in New York City over that three month period."



Laura Horelli, *A Letter to Mother*, 2013, HD video, color, sound, 27 min.

Jacqueline Doyen's work *This looks like one of Bill's paintings* considers hidden histories presented as an appropriation of a photograph taken in the 1960s in New York City. The photograph, unknown until 2010, depicts John F. Kennedy, his brother Robert, and Marilyn Monroe and was shot at a party for JFK's birthday on the same day that Monroe famously sang "Happy Birthday, Mr. President." Both Kennedy's turn their back from the camera, the secret service was charged with making sure that no pictures were taken with Monroe and the brothers,

but Monroe's dress gives it all away, even though the flash blocks her face. Doyen titles the piece in reference to a line from Michaelangelo Antonioni's film *Blow Up*, where the protagonist enlarges a photograph and discovers that he may have witnessed a murder in the made-apparent details. Similarly, the photograph gives clues to what transpired between the Kennedy brothers and Monroe, now legendary in American popular history, and perhaps solves a small piece of the mystery.

Anna Jermolaewa also resurfaces history in *Many are called 2*, a work in which she re-enacts Walker Evans' methodology of taking subway photographs of unsuspecting passengers in 1938. Evans' original photographs were taken on a Contax II camera hidden in his winter coat, with a shutter release cable strung down his arm. When Contax was taken over by the Soviets in 1945, production was moved from Germany to the Ukraine where they continued to make cameras until recently. Jermolaewa found an old Contax II that she had shipped from Kiev and used it this year on the subway the same way that Evans had 76 years ago, effectively collapsing time and image.

The dialectical relationship between public and private is made apparent in **Anouk Kruithof's** *100% Security*, a sculpture that takes on the ever-present surveillance found in New York City post-9/11. In a Plexiglas box made to resemble a security camera, the artist has crumpled 100 photographs of security cameras taken throughout the financial district of New York City. Also reflecting on privacy in a very public city, is **Marklinger + Waerndt's** documentary-style video about Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS). Occupy Wall Street's "nerve center" was in such a space, Zucotti Park. The artist's research-based work, *Public Space Private Place*, traces the 500 or so POPS in New York City, which are often unknown, abandoned and unused.

Shopping Cart (Sanhattan) was produced during **Patrick Hamilton's** 2006 ISCP residency. It is comprised of a typical folding shopping cart

found all over the streets of New York City and often used by the elderly and homeless. Inside the cart is a light box image of the new architecture of the financial district of Santiago, Chile known as "Sanhattan", a parody name linking the cities of Santiago and Manhattan. Sanhattan looks like every financial district, where distinctions are flattened in favor of a generic architecture of glass and steel. For Hamilton, this landscape is also a façade for the tremendous social and economic inequality in Chile.



Patrick Hamilton, *Shopping Cart (Sanhattan)*, 2006, Shopping cart, color coupler print mounted on Plexiglas, light bulb and electrical hardware, 18 x 33 1/2 x 19 in.

German artist **Axel Töpfer** stayed in New York for six months, and during this short time he lived in six different apartments. This itinerant lifestyle is typical of visitors to the city, where it can be difficult to secure permanent housing. *Flat Stories* describes his living situations with poetic phrases written by the artist in black and white prints that

he refers to as “mind movies”; for example, at 718 LND Street, “traces of snow stop to rinse into cracks in the floor.” **Christoph Weber**, a two-time ISCP resident’s contribution to the exhibition is a concrete sculpture made to appear as old grey wood from ISCP’s neighborhood, an industrial area where urban detritus is often cast off. The work acts as a rumination on early New York conceptualism and its impact.

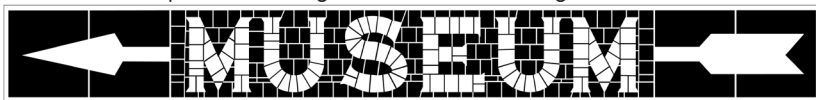


Maura Biava, *Hypotrochoid of Albrecht Dürer & Apion of Giordano Riccati N # 04*, 2014, Photograph and wooden frame, 19 x 14 in.

Balam Bartolomé's *Wonderland* series are intervened lithographs that represent bucolic portraits of life and customs in the United States during the 19th century, transformed by the artist into humorous commentary on capitalism and the art market. Particularly relevant for the context of ISCP is a work that reads "Welcome to my studio!" which depicts an adventurer arriving by canoe to an isolated studio housed in a log cabin. *Hypotrochoid of Albrecht Dürer & Apion of Giordano Riccati N # 04* beautifully combines **Maura Biava's** interest in mathematics and anthropology. Two mathematical shapes starting from a star generated the shape of the clay ice cream cone in the photograph, and shows a common New York City treat also in the guise of the Statue of Liberty's torch.

The everyday is considered in several works in the exhibition. In **Kakyoung Lee's** *Days in New York - F train*, a synced 5-channel video has been created through a process of thousands of pencil drawings. The artist often reconstructs her daily surroundings in drawings that are erased and accumulated on top of each other. All together, their quick movement and traces reveal the rapid momentum of New York City. **Yamashita + Kobayashi's** *Major League Birdwatching* documents the often-forgotten nonhuman inhabitants of New York City. Recorded at Yankee Stadium, the Japanese artist duo followed birds flying into the stadium in search of food during a baseball game. The calm birds in the video contrast the frenzied atmosphere of the stadium, showing two worlds that exist alongside each other but don't collide. **Christine Coenon's** *Les Colonnes De Son* from 1998-2000 introduces the exhibition with a wave of field recordings. The 15 tracks range from the footfalls of joggers on the paths in Central Park to wind in the streets, from the pounding gavel and booming voice of a Christie's auctioneer to a street musician's saxophone, depicting the diverse aural situations that we face everyday, but sometimes do not pause to fully experience. Part of **Bundith Phunsombatlert's** long-term research tracing public artwork in New York City, *Museum (in Black)* places the well-known directional mosaics present in many New York City subway stations out

of context. The engraved "Museum" signs point to a non-existing museum and are placed throughout ISCP's building.



Bundith Phunsombattlert, *Museum (in Black)*, 2014, Engravings on plastic, Variable dimensions

HEY MIKE! Is an artist-produced newspaper by **Karen Elaine Spencer** that serves as a call to change to former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg. During his twelve years as mayor, the homeless population in New York increased by 61 percent, while more new luxury developments were built than ever before. Spencer commissioned writer Mara Verna to write a text about the policies of New York City under the Bloomberg administration for the newspaper, free for the public to take. Alongside the text, are the artist's own ink on paper text paintings that comment on the situation.

Kari Conte, Director of Programs and Exhibitions

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