



Katinka Bock, documented from the series *Zarba Lonsa*, 2015, Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers. Courtesy of the artist & Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, Paris.



**Mercer Union, a centre for contemporary art**  
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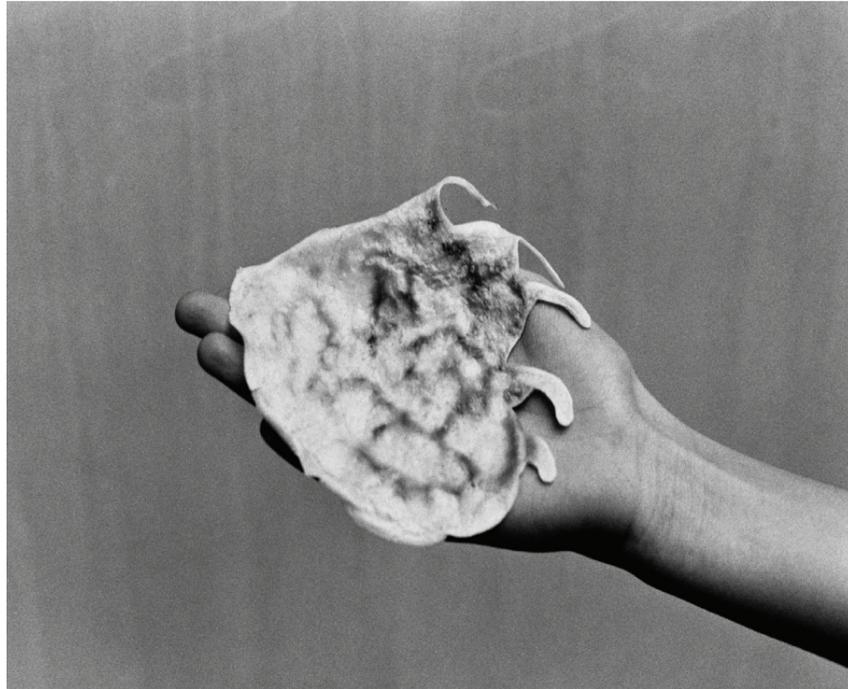


Cover image: Katinka Bock, *\_o\_o\_o\_*, 2017, b/w photograph, 30x45 cm, ed. 1/4 +1AP, courtesy Galerie Jocelyn Wolff Paris

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## BIOGRAPHIES

**Katinka Bock** (France, German, 1976) creates sculptures and installations that explore temporality and space, mining the territories of history and geography, using clay, natural, and found materials, and more recently bronze. Often dealing with natural alteration processes, or filming the disappearance of sculptural elements, she creates a continuous movement between outdoor and indoor spaces. Her work deals with questions about language, common space, with installations and sharing. Bock studied at the Kunsthochschule in Berlin and at the Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts of Lyon. She was an artist-in residence at Villa Mediceis in Rome, and was awarded the Dorothea von Stetten Kunstpreis in Germany, the Prix Ricard in France and the production prize of Fundacion Botin in Spain. Some solo exhibitions include Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, MAMCO, Geneva and Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, USA. Upcoming solo projects include Kunstmuseum Winthertur, Mudam Luxembourg, IAC Villeurbanne, Siobhan Davies Studio in London and Common Guild in Glasgow.

**Aisha Sasha John** is a dancer and poet. Her solo performance *the aisha of oz* premiered at the Whitney Museum in New York in June 2017, and will take place at the MAI in Montreal in April 2018. *I have to live.* (McClelland and Stewart, 2017) is Aisha's third collection of poems. THOU (BookThug 2014) was a finalist for both the Trillium Book Award for Poetry and the ReLit Poetry Award. Aisha's video work and text art have been exhibited in galleries (Doris McCarthy, Oakville Galleries) and was commissioned by Art Metropole as part of a public art performance residency Aisha headed called *Let's understand what it means to be here (together)*. Aisha has an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Guelph, and a B.A. in African Studies and Semiotics from the University of Toronto. She was born in Montreal.

**\_o\_o\_o\_ follows Bock's residency in 2016 as part of the Steps/Mesures program presented in partnership with the Toronto Cultural Office of the French Embassy in Canada and the Institut Français. Additional thanks for the support of Galerie Jocelyn Woff in Paris.**

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Left & right images: Katinka Bock, *sinistra o destra*, 2017, photograph diptych, 30x45 cm each, ed. 1/4 +1AP, courtesy of Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, Paris.

## UPCOMING

### *Steps/Mesures*

In partnership with the Institut Français and the Consulate General of France in Toronto, the *Steps/Mesures* program invites artists and curators living in France to Toronto to forge conversation between cultural ecologies.

Our visiting curators for June & July 2017 include:

Céline Poulin is an independent curator working since 2004, with programs that include *outside the walls* at the Parc Saint Léger, since June 2010. Focusing on the problematics of production in specific contexts, her projects experiment with various forms of collaboration and exhibition. Her research also concerns archetypal images and related social, economic, psychoanalytic and existential structures. Poulin holds a Philosophy degree with a specialization in "crisis and modern thought foundation" at Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University and a DESS "Art of exhibition" at Paris 10 - Nanterre. She has programmed the exhibitions and events *Beautiful pictures* at The Box in 2009 and 2010 and is a cofounding member of collective The Office.

Anne-Lou Vicente & Raphaël Brunel are independent art critics and curators. They founded the bi-annual and bilingual contemporary art magazine about sound *VOLUME* in 2010. Since then they work together in the frame of the editorial and curatorial platform *What You See Is What You Hear*, created in 2014 and continuing under their direction, exploring the link between contemporary art and expanded sound. Drawing as much from art history and phenomenology as media theory and cultural studies, their research, curatorial and editorial projects attach a specific importance to notions such as transmission, communication and diffusion.



## Katinka Bock

*\_o\_o\_o\_*

24 June – 12 August 2017  
 Opening reception Saturday 24 June, 5–8PM

*Holes, errors, windows, openings, borders*

Meditations from poet/dancer Aisha Sasha John responding to a Super8 film produced by Katinka Bock. The film, a component of the exhibition *\_o\_o\_o\_*, is projected through a hole/window into the wall of Mercer Union's workshop. The following is a conversation between Aisha and Katinka, May 2017.

Aisha: I think that you are interested in holes. Or spaces. The part of the pancake that burns makes an extra presence in the form of a beautiful blackness -- it is raised, so it suggests a hole because it is opposite of one. There are holes in every one of the pancakes and there are features showing through them. Where are the rest of the bodies? I think about integration. Of "life" and "art". The opposite of holes, then--I think about fullness. But also, the arm has a torso: where is it? Also, the red pepper: it is a vegetable-fruit that is all space inside. It is a contained (w)hole. I am forgetting something: I have a hole. Everything remains whole.

*Katinka: Yes to all of that. Holes, errors, windows, openings, borders-- walls are my favourite parts of spaces and bodies. The pancake story in the film started spontaneously. More importantly for me is that this process goes quickly; there is no time to elaborate on things and gestures.*

A: YES -- absolutely. I'm struck, thinking in particular of your folded ceramic sculptures, by the just-readiness of these objects. They feel animal to me, alive, curvy, in motion--sexy even, sometimes. They're on swings, they're propped against larger structures. They suggest motion--and emotion: they appear to be having fun or to be serious. It seems to me that you work them just enough --enough to become alive, but the result is never overwrought. I see the power of your work being intuitive--which requires incredible control and listening abilities. The folds of these sculptures have a even-handedness to them that reflects you stopping in time and/or going far enough.

*K: There is a delicate moment in the process of work: the decision. Working fast doesn't mean that everything is good and well balanced. There is this moment of truth when I consider the sculptures and the situation. I take distance and time to reflect, allowing for doubt and failure. The studio is an important site for this contemplative process allowing me to take time in making decisions.*

*I believe that on the one hand you have to take care of people, situations and whatever art and life would be (that means to think, to take time, to be aware); on the other hand I question if following a protocol or a concept makes sense. Elaborating too much on a point can destroy the interest and force of something, particularly with humour. Being tender and generous with those you share is important. Do you know the "Marionettentheater" of Kleist? It's about the elegance of a machine and a bear that always wins a fencing match because he feels the intention of his human adversary. Maybe this story is about consciousness and its limits. Oh, yes, forgetting is nice (sometimes) because it makes space. Remember the pepper story I wrote to you this afternoon.*

*I once met an older gentleman in a supermarket. He kindly addressed me presenting two bell peppers in his hand, a green and red one: "Madame, would you please tell me which one is the red one?" - The gentleman was colour blind.*

*I was curious to see the pepper in the eyes of the gentleman from the supermarket. Indeed I don't remember which one was red or green.*

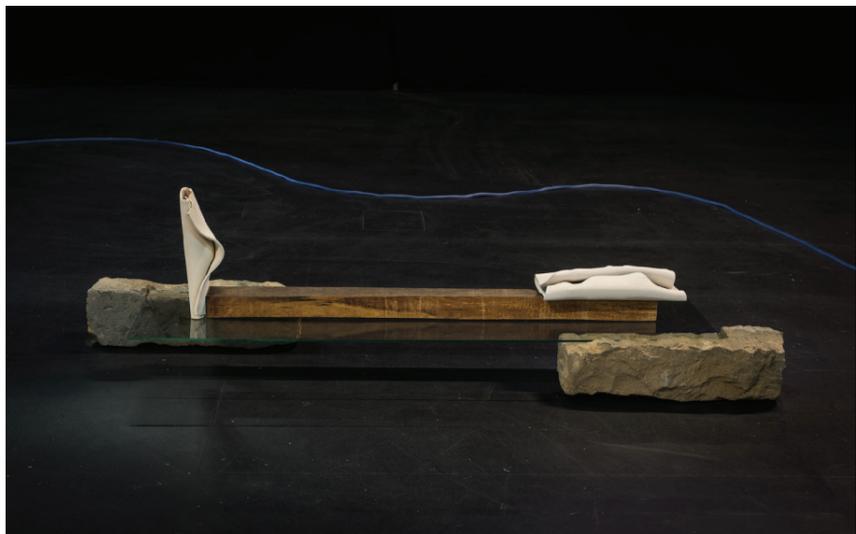
A: Ha -- of course the lighter one is green. That seems obvious now, but you know what - I don't like to eat green peppers: they aren't sweet enough. And so I did not even see them. Do your desires affect your perceptions? Do you think about ugliness? How does filming the objects you make challenge the way you see them?

*K: I'm interested in the potential of change. I don't try to capture reality according to preconceptions of it. The Super8 camera introduces a distance between objects and my way to see them. Something is missing in the film: the colour of course but all of the senses and awareness that reality can have. This is the perspective of an amateur; who loves the process without concern for a precise depiction of reality. Ugliness? I admit that I didn't think consciously about this, but maybe there is something in this sense while making decisions. In isolation nothing is beautiful. Beauty or ugliness exist in relation to someone or a situation, to a spirit of a time or a cultural code.*

A: When you say you are interested in the potential of change, would you also say that you are interested in or seek the unknown?

*K: It's one of the reasons to stand up in the morning, to live and to create: curiosity. And doubt. The sculptor Giacometti worked again and again on the same sculpture, destroying the work of the previous day. A presumption would be to read this process as doubtful and pessimistic. Giacometti believed that his need to change his sculpture was motivated by curiosity and hope. This trust in possibility to find something unknown goes through disappearances, changing of mind and failure. I follow this way of thinking.*

A: This is obviously film. The atmosphere is dancing. With film you can see the pulsing molecules of the sky. An object has fingers. A jellyfish is held aloft. A flat hand holds a full hand. There was a liquid and it made contact with a pan and the result is a flat solid -- its history is palpable. The batter travelled this way or it was poured.



*K: Hands are so important for me. They are the borders of the body and the partner of thinking. Liquids are so triggering, especially water. Humans seem to look for solutions to contain, to canalize and to control it. It never gets lost, and a tiny hole is a sufficient effect to enter into a system. To lose, to pour, to relax, to allow, let it go. - Think about physics and the law of forces: the power of gravity and the energy of movement. Gravity seems to be a partner of dancing. And sculpture. For me, film is a helpful medium when I can't resolve or open up a question with sculpture. I touch and try.*

A: There is evidence of wind. The flatness is engaged in movement. I don't want to see anything other than what is presented for the length of time it is presented: that is, the rhythm of this film is just. Oh yeah -- the balls. The balls are important. This film taught me what a ball is: a solid hole. Space, actualized. The balls are important. Wait -- are the balls but red peppers? It doesn't matter. Hi, pepper. A red that is dark grey, reaching towards blackness, suggesting redness.

*K: Interesting, you think about the red, not about the green. Hi, pepper. Hi, salt. - I once did a piece with a title "Zucker und Salz", sugar and salt. Both look the same but don't taste the same at all.*

A: Things disappear. Against a different background, an object changes colour. We should look at things: things have beauty.

K: Yes

A: You can't see the people behind the sheet. Four hands. Water whips a wall -- how did I ever miss that the first time, now a favourite part. The water returns. The change it makes to the wall is the kind of subtle and absolute difference only water makes.



*K: I agree with you about the water. It's the counterpart of the solid liquid shapes. The 2 and 4 hands are chapters about growing and differences. I asked N and A, to hold the sheet together, N with their right hand, A with their left. If one person were to up the sheet with both hands, it would be relatively straight across, but because of their height difference, the two arms make a diagonal line holding the sheet together. This difference is significant.*

A: I consider this work choreography.

*K: What is choreography? Is it a dialogue, a conversation? Tell me more about that.*

A: I experience deliberateness in the work about the placement of the objects in space as a function of time. I think choreography can be a lot of things, but I suppose what I meant in describing it as such is that these placements, the movement, and the rhythm all cohere to produce and maintain an energy--or energies. I suppose I see choreography as a tool for creating and directing energy.

Now that I have watched the film again, I have a better answer for you. It is like choreography because, for me, as a viewer I am being asked to watch things move. Even in the "still" shots, because of the granular quality of the film, there is a palpable vibration of the atmosphere. Part of the grace of the beginning of the film, is the subtlety of the movement I am invited to witness: the pulsing surface of the space behind, the sheet, hits upon the sharp, solid outline of a pancake; one pepper, and now another one, disappearing from a bowl; the gentle shake of the frame in still shots. This tiny shake reveals the breath of the person holding the camera. Things move, the film seems to say, as a function of being alive. There is something reverent about your work. Is there a way you understand your practice as an expression of a spiritual life or perspective? What is the role of love in your work?

*K: Rain is wet, lemon ice is delicious and all animals are equal, but some are more equal than others. I feel strongly connected to these perceptions of reality. Love is found in connections and links. My work is often precarious (not fragile). Two or more elements meet and the connection between them can be undone, like a bow of ribbon. This has something to do with love, but not a spiritual or symbolic perspective. There is no symbolic connection to a ceramic falling and a lemon shrinking: these are the effects of gravity, evaporation, climate and shaping time.*

A: Every time I watch the film I see something new! In this last watch, I notice a conversation in the work around gravity. The weight of things is often suggested: the peacefulness of the girl's face under the soft weight of the pancake, the peppers hung by a finger, then quickly lifted away... I'd love to know how you think about limitations. Is your work interested in reality?

*K: Limitations are everywhere, they create conversations. Joelle Tuerlinckx once said to me while we installed our work in a group show: 'you have to accuse the border.' She pointed to the step in the exhibition space. I loved this moment. She was clearly speaking about this physical step in the room. I often think about it when I visit a new location, when I meet people or when I feel troubled about the world we live in; we should accuse the border, not accept it as something natural, but as a result of decisions. It's possible to change it, to question it, to propose another shape. From this perspective, I consider my work to be realistic.*