NATURE MORTE Contemporary Artists Reinvigorate the Still Life

a touring exhibition presented by MOCA London





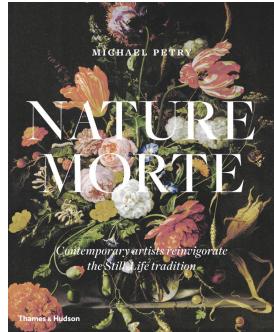
Peter Jones, Ollie Monkey

NATURE MORTE

Contemporary Artists Reinvigorate the Still Life

'Nature Morte', translated literally from the French as 'dead nature', is a genre of artwork which dates back as far as the ancient Egyptians. More commonly known as 'still life', the genre is recognised primarily through it's depictions of inaninmate objects, such as food, flowers, or other such domestic ephemera. Still life works achieved their zenith in the Western tradition around the end of the 16th century, but continue to be produced today, in new and intriguing forms.

It is this modern re-imagining of the genre that inspired artist and author Michael Petry to bring together over 180 contemporary artists in his 2013 book 'Nature Morte'. Subsequently, in his guise as Director of MOCA London and alongside Curator Roberto Ekholm, he staged a touring exhibition based upon the publication, which would travel Europe for three years, visiting Sweden, Norway and Poland before finally returning to London.



Nature Morte, by Michael Petry

NORWAY 2015

Hå Gamle Prestegard, Stavanger 6 June - 30 August

In the summer of 2015 the Nature Morte tour made its first stop at Hå gamle prestegard, a former pastor's residence which now functions as a modern art gallery and cultural centre. Works from the core 62 travelling artists were arranged over both the ground floor of the space and the loft, in which the traditional timber roofing and sombre lighting accentuated the projections and video works of Jennifer Steinkamp and Guillaume Paris.



Interior views of Nature Morte downstairs at Hå Gamle Prestegard

Nature Morte

Contemporary Artists Reinvigorate the Still Life Hå gamle prestegard, Stavanger, Norway 6 June – 30 August, 2015 www.hagamleprestegard.no



Artioto

Peter Abrahama « Sue Arrowsmith « Annie Attridge « Aziz+Cucher » Conrad Bakker » Barnaby Barford » Berthold Bell » Jan Kjetil Bjorheim » Elaine Bradford « Per Christian Brown » Mat Collishaw « Marcus Cope » Michael Craig-Martin » John Dugdale » Roberto Ekholm « Saara Ekström » Nancy Fouts « Nick Fox » Anya Gallaccio » Ana Genovés » Ori Gersht » Rigoberto A. Gonzalez » Cynthia Greig » Martin Gustavsson » Jefferson Hayman » Paul Hazelton » Todd Hebert » Renata Hegyi » Jim Hodges » Bill Jacobson » Alexander James » Peter Jones » Darren Jones » Edward Kay » Rob Kesseler » Jone Kvie » Alana Lake » Janne Malmroe » Carol Marin-Paohe » Livia Marin » Caroline McCarthy » Damien Meade » John Mitchell » Polly Morgan » Museum Clausum » Dermot O'Brien » Gabriel Orozco » Bruno Pacheco » Guillaume Paris » Michael Petry » Marc Quinn » Victoria Reynolds » Eric Rhein » Miho Sato » Rebecca Scott » Andro Semeiko » Jane Simpson » Jim Skull » Matt Smith » Rob Smith » Jennifer Steinkamp » Richard Stone » Yuken Teruya » Hanne Tyrmi » Maciej Urbanek » Mathew Weir » James White » Kraig Wilson » Cindy Wright

Curated by Michael Petry & Eva Watne Assisting curators: Roberto Ekholm & Ingunn Nord-Varhaug

The flyer for Nature Morte at Hå Gamle Prestegard, Norway









Interior views of Nature Morte downstairs at Hå Gamle Prestegard







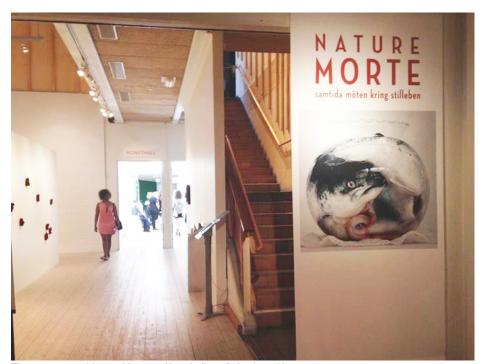


Interior views of Nature Morte upstairs at Hå Gamle Prestegard

SWEDEN 2016

Konsthallen-Bohusläns Museum, Uddevalla 7 May - 28 August

When Nature Morte arrived in Sweden in 2016 the exhibition was hosted by Konsthallen-Bohusläns Museum, in the town of Uddevalla. 10 new Swedish and Nordic artists were added to the presentation, and for the first time historic works from the museum's collection were shown alongside the contemporary pieces. This facilitated an artistic discourse which reached back from the modern artists all the way to the Old Masters of the 16th and 17th century.



The entrance to Nature Morte at Konsthallen - Bohusläns Museum

NATURE MORTE

The flyer for Nature Morte at Konsthallen - Bohusläns Museum



Barnaby Barfod, Do It Again I Didnt Press Record





Interior views of Nature Morte at Konsthallen - Bohusläns Museum









Interior views of Nature Morte at Konsthallen - Bohusläns Museum









Interior views of Nature Morte at Konsthallen - Bohusläns Museum

POLAND 2017

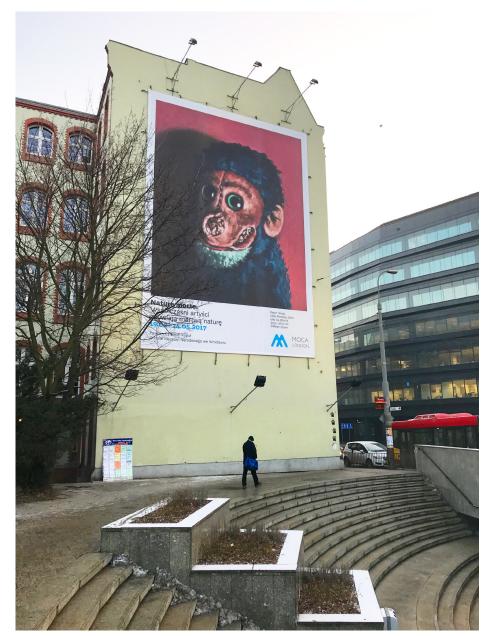
The Four Domes Pavilion, National Museum, Wroclaw 18 February - 14 May

In the beginning of 2017, the tour made its most impressive stop thus far, at one of Poland's main branches of its National Museum system in Wroclaw. The exhibition was heralded by impressive, multi-story displays of signage around the city, and received extensive coverage on Polish national television and press.

The exhibition itself was again bolstered by the showing of historic works from the National Museum's collection, and the introduction of over 30 native artists. As part of the presentation, a nation-wide jewellery competetion on the theme of still life was also exhibited within the space, adding an entirely new angle on the central theme.



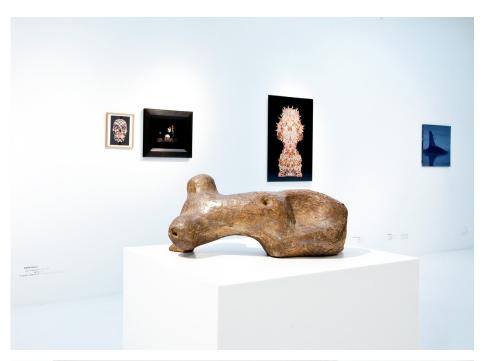
Interior signage for Nature Morte at The Four Domes Pavilion, Poland



Exterior signage for Nature Morte at The Four Domes Pavilion, Poland





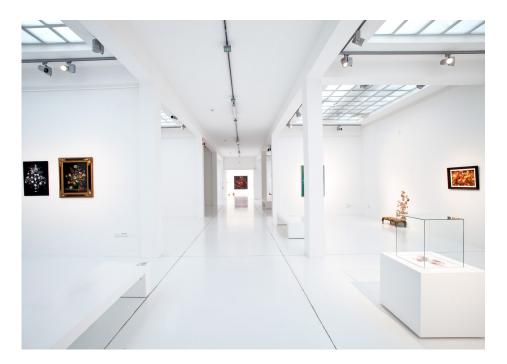


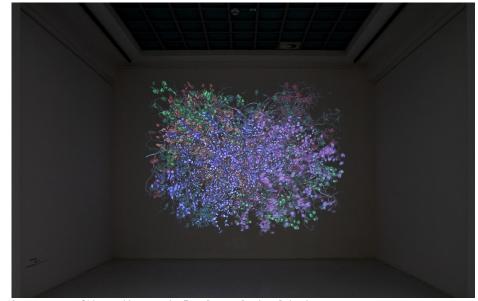


Interior views of Nature Morte at The Four Domes Pavilion, Poland

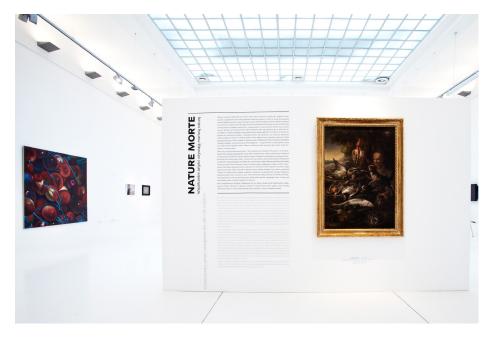


Jim Skull, Untitled



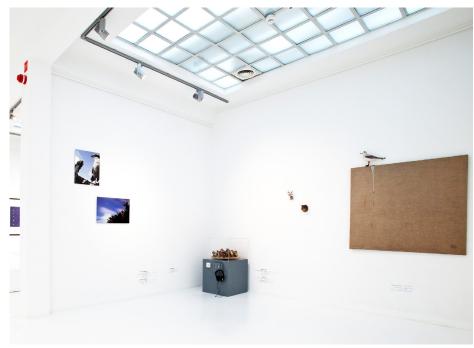


Interior views of Nature Morte at the Four Domes Pavilion, Poland









Interior views of Nature Morte at The Guildhall Art Gallery

ENGLAND 2017/18

The Guildhall Art Gallery, London 7 September 2017 - 2 April 2018

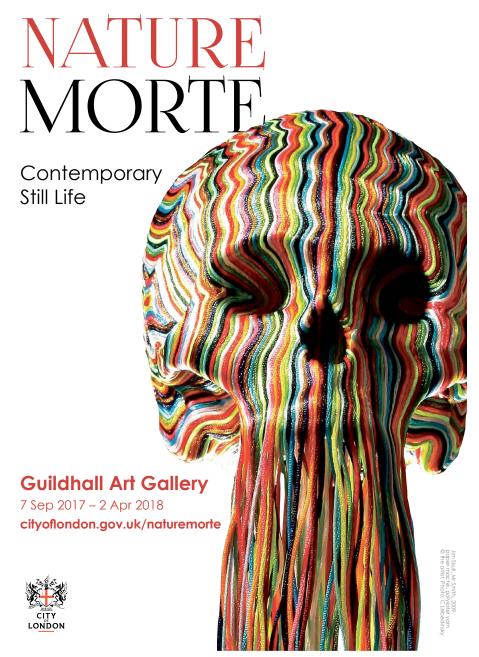
The **Nature Morte** tour made its final stop at London's Guildhall Art Gallery in September, 2017. The Guildhall is known for housing the City of London's historic art collection of some 4,000 pieces, but exhibitions of contemporary artworks are practically unheard of. Thus, when **Nature Morte** reached London it was met with widespread media interest.

The display at the Guildhall Art Gallery incorporated works from the City of London's world renowned collection of classics, enriching the historical dialogue within the show like never before. Conversely, several contemporary pieces from the touring show were displayed upstairs, in the historic gallery, thus disrupting the traditional narrative even further.



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Exterior view of The Guildhall Art Gallery



The flyer for Nature Morte at The Guildhall Art Gallery



Michael Petry, Revenge of the Florist









Interior views of Nature Morte at The Guildhall Art Gallery

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2015 - 2018

Over the course of **Nature Morte's** international tour the exhbition attracted a large amount of attention from myriad media outlets, ranging from online blogs to national tv companies.

Images of the opening reception for the National Museum, Wroclaw (shown below and to the right) document how **Nature Morte** was anticipated eagerly as one of the landmark cultural events that year. Curators Michael Petry, Roberto Ekholm and Małgorzata Santarek subsequently conducted many interviews for Polish national television.



The curators speak at The Four Domes Pavilion, Poland



The curators being interviewed for Polish natonal television



The opening reception at The Four Domes Pavilion, Poland









Dåtidens och samtidens stilleben

Årets sommarutställning på Bohusläns museum heter Nature morte. Över 70 samtida konstnärers verk, utländska och svenska, möts i denna stora presentation av stilleben.

Nature Morte at Konsthallen-Bohusläns Museum reviewed by Swedish press

Nature morte 19.02artyści ożywiają martwą naturę

14.05.2017



Nature Morte at The National Museum, Wroclaw banner advertisement

Samtida konst möter stilleben

"Nature Morte" är Konsthallens sommarutställning, vars vernissage är på lördag. I salen i Bohusläns museum visas verk av mellan 70 och 80 konstnärer, både svenska och internationella, perioden 7 maj-28 augusti.

Årets sommarutställning i Konsthallen, Bohusläns museum, är stor. I "Nature Morte" ställer 70-80 konstnärer ut i ett flertal olika tekniker. I skaran finns namn som Anna Camner, Ernst Billgren, Klara Kristalova och Cindy Wright.

Samtida konstnärer visar upp arbeten som på olika vis förhåller sig till stillebentraditionen från 1500och 1600-talen, då mästare som Jacob Jordaens och Willem Claeszoon Heda verkade. Ett annat namn för stilleben ("stilla liv") är just nature morte, som betyder död natur.

Vid vernissagen på lördag närvarar två konstnärer, Roberto Ekholm samt Michael Petry. Tillsammans presenterar de "Nature Morte" på svenska och engelska, sedan Konsthallens curator, Agneta von Zeinel hälsat dem och



Konstverket "Nature morte 2" skapades av konstnären Cindy Wright **FOTO: Cindy Wright** 2010. (Bilden är beskuren.)

Zeipel har för övrigt varit cocurator till utställningens svenska urval. Museichefen Hans Kindgren är med och inviger det hela.

Utställningen utforskar tidlösa teman som liv, död, förgänglighet och tidens gång och har tidigare visats maren blir det visningar av utställningen vid tolv tillfällen, med start den 18 maj. Vid visningarna den 23 respektive 26 juli är det Roberto Ekholm som berättar om utställningen.

Stefan Hagel

Dead symbolic: art of the still life, then and now

Modern works meet old masters in a new exhibition about beauty and decay

Maey Kennedy

Death is everywhere among the roses in an initially charmingly pretty but increasingly disconcerting exhibition, the first at Guildhall Art Gallery devoted to still life art: the lovely flowers are there, but so are bloody hunks of raw meat, a bullet fashioned from human bone, and a cobwebby skull made from dust.

"It's death," its curator, Michael Petry, said cheerfully, "it's always been all about death. In the 17th century you looked at a vase of luscious blooms and everyone immediately got the message: this is the peak of perfection and beauty, it's all downhill from here. That's the element that is really hooking in contemporary artists."

Change and decay is a very practical issue with the skull made from a duster and glued household dust by the artist Paul Hazelton, entitled Fright Wig. "It is a conservation nightmare," said the Guildhall's curator, Katherine Pearce, watching nervously for any falling dust.

"And of course most of household dust is actually made up of human skin," Petry added, "so the circle is complete."

Darren Jones's A Time and a Place is also cause for anxiety, a collection of objects perilously balanced on a small glass shelf, representing a rollicking weekend in the gay bars and clubs of Fire Island off New York, including ferry tickets, mouthwash, lubricant, whiskey, paracetamol - and a tape measure.

The exhibition, which opens at Guildhall in London on 7 September, brings together contemporary works, including pieces by Michael Craig-Martin, Marc Quinn and Mat Collishaw chosen by Petry, an artist and author, and his co-



Details from The Great Leveller, Alexander James (main); Rabbit with Curlers, Nancy Fouts; and Bouquet, Jennifer Steinkamp

'A generation of young artists has grown up in the shadow of endless killing, nonstop war' Michael Petry, artist and curator

curator, the artist and dancer Roberto Ekholm, and old master still lifes from the stores of the City of London.

Death is explicit in many of the contemporary pieces. Collishaw's work resembles a 17th century Dutch still life, food piled against a dark background; it actually represents the last meal chosen by a real death row prisoner, Juan Soria, before his execution for murder in Texas.

Petry, who has just published a book on still lifes, wants visitors to look more carefully for what artists are really saying - the exhibition is called *nature* morte, literally "dead nature" in French.

"We are more aware of death than ever now," he said. "A generation of young artists has grown up in the last



two decades in the shadow of endless killing, nonstop war in Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq - and now we have two madmen with their fingers on the nuclear button."

Visitors may pass three glass vases at the entrance without realising they are the first exhibit, Petry's work. The colours of the vases and flowers relate to the gay code of coloured handkerchiefs to indicate sexual preference; the shapes have even more intimate meaning. "It will all be explained," Pearce said, "this isn't an exhibition where we're shying away from anything edgy."

Nature Morte, Guildhall Art Gallery, 7 September 2017 to 30 April 2018 Nature Morte recieved extensive press coverage from English media outlets when it came to London in 2017, including full page reviews from The Guardian, and The Times, shown here. The exhibition was among The Guardian's 'Five of the Best' cultural events and The Times' 'Top Picks'.

Nature Morte also featured in Arts Industry Magazine, Country Life, Londonist, The Metro, Womens Weekly, and many other printed publications and online blogs.

Nature Morte Press Features

Norway

Sweden

Poland

England

Apollo Magazine
Arts Indusry Magazine
Country Life
The Guardian
The Jonathon Ross Show
Londonist Magazine
The Metro
The Times
Womens Weekly

Nature Morte at The Guildhall Art Gallery reviewed by The Guardian



Nature Morte at The Guildhall Art Gallery featured in The Time's Top Picks

Five of the best

Basquiat

the jazz improvisations of Jackson Pollock with scrawled, death-haunted messages from the street. This raw style made him a sensation in 1980s New York. His death in 1988 at the age of just 27 only intensified that reputation. Now, with the US plunged into political and social disunion, Basquiat looks like a prophet of the country's woes. He also looks like a remarkable painter who showed how youth

Degas "Impressionist" is a woefully चूं inadequate description of this artist of obsessive voveurism. almost frightening observational power, and erotic imagination. Degas lived in a solitary world of his own while moving endlessly through the public spaces of Paris, from the ballet

₹ to race tracks and circuses. His

and rebellion can electrify art.

E Barbican Art Gallery, EC2,

Thu to 28 Jan

studies of women sublimate Jean-Michel Basquiat replaced sexual fascination into images of strange poetic intensity. The National Gallery, WC2, Wed to 7 May

> **Martin Boyce** The reality of modern cities is potently recreated by this 2011 Turner prize-winning Glasgow artist in works that seem Italian Art, N1, Wed to 17 Dec abstract yet are full of poignant associations. His installations are Nature Morte like frozen playgrounds where something terrible has happened and the swings are off-limits. He creates melancholic sculptural prisons from decaying public spaces, brutalist shopping centres and dreary parks. The Modern Institute, Glasgow,

Arte Povera For once, the Estorick Collection abandons its obsession with minor futurists and puts on an exhibition that actually matters. The 1960s Italian group Arte Povera was the Jonathan Jones

first art movement to confront environmental crisis. At a time of dramatic urbanisation and economic growth in Italy, artists such as Mario Merz chose natural materials over the plastic world of pop. Here their influence on British artists from Richard Long to Gavin Turk is mapped. The Estorick Collection of Modern

Mat Collishaw and Gabriel Orozco are among the contemporary artists revisiting the still life tradition here. Ever since eye-fooling bowls of fruit were included in ancient Roman frescoes, the still life's frozen perfection has represented both life and death. It lends itself remarkably well to conceptual reinventions, including Collishaw's eerie reconstructions of last meals on Death Row. Guildhall Art Gallery, EC2, to 2 Apr

visual art

Putting the thrill into still life

A dying genre is reanimated in this rich and audacious exhibition, says Rachel Campbell-

Johnston

English we call it still life. In French they say nature morte. Translated literally that means "dead nature". And it is no accident, it emerges, that the curator Michael Petry chose to use the French title for his new Guildhall Art Gallery show Contemporary audiences, their

responses too often blunted by the brash and the brazen can easily dismiss the still life as dull and outmoded. The prospect of looking at flower arrangements and defunct fishes hardly sounds enticing. Yet, although you will find both in this Guildhall exhibition, you will also discover plenty that's rather less predictable: a squirming confection of pornographic cut-outs: a bullet created from a ground-down finger bone; a sickening close-up of freshly butchered entrails; a stuffed rabbit

· with hair rollers curling its ears. This show translates a traditional genre into contemporary language. It sets out to reinvigorate a once-popular tradition to make it look not just fresh again, but feel politically, socially and, most saliently, philosophically relevant.

The still life first came into its own in the mid-17th century. It was then that Netherlandish artists began to paint their stilleven paintings of objects that, instead of being treated as mere props in some more salient drama.

were treated as main players. You can see this in a number of otherwise fairly unremarkable paintings that, drawn from the golden age paintings, now go on show. Floris van Schooten focuses on breakfast cheeses; Pieter Claesz shows

us a dinner to be a tankard of ale subject, the curator the term "still life" cannot do it

justice. These are, quintessentially, allegorical mages. They are freighted with messages about life, its meanings its morals and, most saliently, its fundamental brevity. They are basically, the curator argues, all about death, but it was left to the French. in the 18th century, to coin the name that best conjures up this darkly brooding symbolism.

A newly restored 18th-century painting, on show for the first time, makes the point clear. It is not particularly riveting. There are books in the foreground; at the back a

candlestick. And before conservation a pot and paintbrush, which had been added two centuries later restorers they reveal a human skull beneath. This canvas, like so many works of its genre, was intended to function as a "vanitas" The name, Latin for "emptiness alludes to the transience of human existence and warns of ness of all our earthly goods. It is this presence of death

These allegorical images contain messages about

life's brevity

that gives this picture its gravitas. Nature Morte is a touring exhibition designed to accompany the lavishly illustrated book that Petry published a few years ago. It has already been This is the only chance to see it in the JK. Its fundamental argument is that these images of frequently mundane objects have been adapted over centuries A tradition that can be traced back as far as ancient Egyptian tomb paintings is reinvigorated by contemporary artists for our modern age. This show presents anything from textiles to taxidermy, digital projections to a skull made from sloughed-off human skin. Yet, ever radical the style or the medium, death and its metaphors

Artists from two dozen countries are chosen to illustrate the argument A few are quite famous — Gabriel Orozco, for instance — but most are little known. Those who bought Petry's book may well be disappointe You won't find Gerhard Richter

and a Cello, 2002, painted by nainted candles or Damien Hirst's

diamond skull. But don't be dismayed This is an intellectually vivid (despite the banal text panels) and visually striking show. It intersperses its handful of fairly uninspiring but usefully illustrative period pictures with a vibrant array of modern pieces in a broad range of media.

Divided into sections, the hang focuses on such subjects as the depictions of food or domestic accoutrements, the symbolism of animals or the allegories of flowers Yet the range of approaches is stimulatingly wide. Several artists refer directly to their Dutch predecessors, Maciei Urbanek details each desiccated wrinkle on the skins of citrus fruit as carefully as Rembrandt painted the slack furrows on an ageing sitter's skin. Alexander James photographs underwater still lifes. But for John Kaine it is enough just to spell out "Dead Roses" in rusted steel capitals The flowers, he suggests, would decay into a memory as stark as this.

Berthold Bell photographs a dead rat

as part of a series that documents political crisis in contemporary Greece. Bill Jacobson's blurry picture are about the Aids pandemic. Images in this show, it emerges, can allude to pretty much anything from mental illness through street death squads to threats to our biosystem — although I defy anyone to guess that James Hart Dyke's painting of a rubber duck is about secret intelligence without At times the show is rather too

all-encompassing. Does Guillaume Paris's digital animation starring Pinocchio coughed up by a whale really count as a still life?

Then again, one of the points of

this exhibition is to provoke us into reconsidering the art-historical genre pick up the metaphors of the traditional still life painting and carry them into new territories. The result is a richly varied and audaciously imaginative range of work, but death, it emerges, is the most treasured prize You can't miss it. The grinning skulls of the nature morte are everywhere. Nature Morte: Contemporary Still Life is at Guildhall Art Gallery, London EC2 until April 2





Marcus Cope's Various

Titles, 2009. Below: Nancy Fouts's Rabbit

Nature Morte at The Guildhall Art Gallery featured in The Guardian's Five of the best

Mon to 4 Nov

NATURE MORTE

Contemporary Artists Reinvigorate the Still Life

Nature Morte Artists

Travelling Artists

Peter Abrahams, Sue Arrowsmith, Annie Attridge, Aziz + Cucher, Conrad Bakker, Barnaby Barford, Berthold Bell, Per Christian Brown, Mat Collishaw, Marcus Cope, Michael Craig-Martin, John Dugdale, Roberto Ekholm, Saara Ekström, Nancy Fouts, Nick Fox, Anya Gallaccio, Ana Genovés, Ori Gersht, Rigoberto A. Gonzalez, Cynthia Greig, Martin Gustavsson, Jefferson Hayman, Paul Hazelton, Todd Hebert, Renata Hegyi, Bill Jacobson, Alexander James, Peter Jones, Edward Kay, Rob Kesseler, Alana Lake, Janne Malmros, Carol Marin-Pache, Livia Marin, Caroline McCarthy, Damien Meade, John Mitchell, Polly Morgan, Dermot O'Brien, Gabriel Orozco, Bruno Pacheco, Guillaume Paris, Michael Petry, Marc Quinn, Eric Rhein, Miho Sato, Rebecca Scott, Andro Semeiko, Jane Simpson, Jim Skull, Matt Smith, Rob Smith, Jennifer Steinkamp, Richard Stone, Yuken Teruya, Maciej Urbanek, Mathew Weir, James White, Kraig Wilson, Cindy Wright

Additional Artists - Norway

Jone Kvie, Hanne Tyrmi

Additional Artists - Sweden

Anna Camner, Dan Perrin, Ernst Billgren, Jone Kvie, Klara Kristalova, Mats Adelman, Matts Leiderstam, Nils-Erik Mattsson, Sally Kindberg, Filippa Barkman

Additional Artists - Poland

Magdelena Abakanowicz, Jan Jaromir Aleksiun, Zdzislaw Beksinski, Andrezej Bielawski, Felice Boselli, Renata Buziak, Jan Kjetil Bjorheim, Wlodzimierz Borowski, Krystyna Cybinska, Witold Dederko, Andrzej Dudek-Durer, Marek Gardulski, Darren Jones, Tadeusz Kantor, Przybyslaw Krajewski, Hanna Krzetuska-Geppert, Andrzej Lachowicz, Jerzy Lewczynski, Zbigniew Makowski, Nils-Erik Mattsson, Klaus Wehner, George Nerlich, Malarz Nieznany, Jerzy Nowosielski, Victoria Reynolds, Jadwiga Sawicka, Jonasz Stern, Alina Szapocznikow, Zbigniew Tomaszczuk, Barbara Zworska-Raz

Additional Artists - England

Emma Bennett, Maurizio Bongiovanni, Kim Baker, Claudia Carr, Simon English, Helena Goldwater, James Hart Dyke, Kate Joyce, John Kaine, Sally Kindberg, Nils-Erik Mattsson, Aidan McNeill, Lisa Milroy, Carlos Noronha Feio, Michael Raedecker, Jane Telford, Cammie Toloui, Clare Twomey

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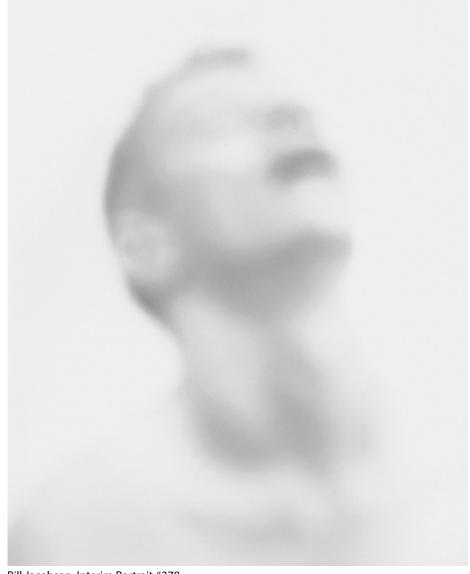
Front Cover - Blow Up, Ori Gersht

Back Cover - Milk and Earth, Peter Abrahams

Book Design: Elliott Higgs

Published: 2017





Bill Jacobson, Interim Portrait #378