

# Press Release

## Berlin, 28 September 2022

### KW Institute for Contemporary Art announces Fall Program 2022

KW Institute for Contemporary Art is pleased to present its Fall Program of 2022, which investigates the mechanisms of visual and popular culture through notions of reproduction, ownership and authenticity as exemplified within the work of **Michel Majerus**, **Christopher Kulendran Thomas** and **Atiëna R. Kilfa**.



Michel Majerus, *Ohne Titel*, 1991, © Michel Majerus Estate, 2022. Courtesy neugerriemschneider, Berlin and Matthew Marks Gallery. Photo: Jens Ziehe, Berlin

## **Michel Majerus**

### ***Early Works***

22 October 22 – 15 January 23

Opening 21 October 22, 7 pm

Curator: Krist Gruijthuijsen

Assistant Curator: Léon Kruijswijk

The exhibition *Michel Majerus – Early Works* at KW Institute for Contemporary Art seeks to uncover the earliest layers of Michel Majerus' (1967-2002, LUX) artistic practice by showing works he produced between 1990 and 1996. Many of these pieces are on public view for the first time.

The exhibition is dedicated to the beginnings of Majerus' nationally and internationally celebrated work. Majerus' artistic approach is already apparent in the early works created during his studies. These explore visual culture, time, speed and seriality as well as virtual and physical space. The artist's continuous observations of surface and space as well as his inquiries into materials and techniques were essential to his methodological way of illuminating how images are produced. This investigation formed the foundations of his reflections on the meaning and power of visual culture.

On its ground floor and main hall KW will show over 80 pieces from the artist's early works set in a site-specific exhibition architecture. Fragments of scaffolding will recall Majerus' first institutional solo show at the Kunsthalle Basel in 1996, wherein the artist created a scenography that integrated viewers into its visual space. This practice allowed Majerus to initiate a new and critical confrontation with the continuous hybridization of visual culture, and simultaneously disclosed the impossibility to escape the ever growing, pervasive presence of images and virtual space in the fabric of our daily life.

Besides the exhibition at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (n.b.k.), Kunstverein in Hamburg, Michel Majerus Estate, and the gallery neugerriemschneider in Berlin, will further explore Michel Majerus' oeuvre in all its complexity, in order to honor it on an unprecedented scale. Loans from the artist's estate, as well as from public and private collections, will offer new insights into Michel Majerus' early work as well as topical questions posed throughout his larger body of work. In parallel with these exhibitions in Berlin and Hamburg, thirteen museums throughout Germany will show works by Michel Majerus from their collections.

Opening twenty years after the death of Michel Majerus (1967-2002), the exhibition series *Michel Majerus 2022*, which unfolds across Germany, is dedicated to various phases and aspects of the artist's extraordinary oeuvre. His body of work has continued to influence subsequent generations of artists. In 2023, a comprehensive publication regarding this series of exhibitions will be released.

The exhibitions on Michel Majerus at KW and at n.b.k. are supported by Hauptstadtkulturfonds Berlin.

**Christopher Kulendran Thomas**  
***Another World***  
in collaboration with **Annika Kuhlmann**  
featuring **Aṇaṅkuperuntinaivarkal Inkaaleneraam**  
22 October 22 – 15 January 23  
Opening 21 October 22, 7 pm  
Curator: Krist Gruijthuijsen  
Assistant Curator: Sofie Krogh Christensen

*“How do you tell the story of the losing side of a conflict  
when history has already been written by the winners?”*  
– Christopher Kulendran Thomas

The exhibition *Christopher Kulendran Thomas – Another World* at KW Institute for Contemporary Art explores an alternative approach to technology through the prism of the defeated revolutionary struggle for an independent Tamil homeland.

During the Sri Lankan Civil War, the de facto state of Tamil Eelam was self-governed by a liberation movement that, in the early years of the World Wide Web, used the internet to coordinate a globally distributed parallel economic system amongst the Tamil diaspora. However, the movement’s political ambitions were eclipsed by a bitter military conflict and the autonomous state they led was brutally eradicated in 2009 by the Sri Lankan government.

Developed together with longtime collaborator Annika Kuhlmann, the exhibition features a major new commission, *The Finesse* (2022), that examines some of the lost legacies of this liberation movement in Kulendran Thomas’ family homeland. The immersive film installation melts pop culture into political science and combines archive footage with AI-generated avatars. The work is choreographed across five monolithic mirrored screens and a projection that spans KW’s first floor gallery to form an architectural hallucination. *The Finesse* traces the Tamil liberation movement’s attempt to imagine a cooperative economy based on renewable energy, communal ownership and computational coordination. Blurring the boundaries between historical research and a sci-fi proposition for an alternate reality, it looks at how the art, architecture and technology that were lost with the defeat of the de facto state of Eelam could today inform radically different, and constantly shifting, ideas of the future. With parts of the work continually algorithmically generated anew, the film is never quite the same twice.

Across the second-floor gallery, KW presents a series of newly commissioned paintings that extend Kulendran Thomas’ use of artificial intelligence technologies. Exhibited alongside ceramic works by Aṇaṅkuperuntinaivarkal Inkaaleneraam, a leading light of the Eelam artistic resistance, the paintings are made using machine-learning algorithms trained on the memetic circulation of art historical influences from the Western canon to Sri Lanka’s post-civil war art world.

Bisecting the second-floor gallery is a new variation of the 2019 video work *Being Human* which takes the viewer on an elliptical journey around Sri Lanka, from the fallout of the civil war there to the biennial of contemporary art founded in its aftermath. Combining real people’s lived experiences with algorithmically synthesized characters, the film features various guests of the Colombo Art Biennale, as well as a brief appearance from Kulendran Thomas’ uncle, a family hero who established the Centre for Human Rights in Tamil Eelam.

*Christopher Kulendran Thomas – Another World* is initiated by Stefan Kalmár, produced in partnership with the Institute of Contemporary Art, London, Kunsthalle Zürich and KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, and realized with the generous support of Filecoin Foundation and Filecoin Foundation for the Decentralized Web.

*The Finesse* (2022) by Christopher Kulendran Thomas is commissioned by the Institute of Contemporary Art, London, in partnership with Kunsthalle Zürich and KW Institute for Contemporary Art and realized with the generous support of Filecoin Foundation, Filecoin Foundation for the Decentralized Web and Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg and with thanks to OMA|AMO, satis&fy and Adam Hall Group.

The exhibition at KW is generously supported by KW Freunde and supported by Fluentum/Markus Hannebauer.

**Atiéna R. Kilfa**

***The Unhomely***

22 October 22 – 15 January 23

Curator: Anna Gritz

Assistant Curator: Sofie Krogh Christensen

The exhibition *The Unhomely* at KW Institute for Contemporary Art marks the first institutional solo presentation by Atiéna R. Kilfa (b.1990, FR). Kilfa uses photography, sculpture, video, and installations to explore how personal and cultural memories tend to conflict and overlap. Her most recent work draws on her interest in the composition of models, dioramas, still lifes, and tableaux vivants, which she sees as sites loaded with inherited narratives and social codes, opening them up for collective review.

*The Unhomely* stages a new video work alongside architectural fragments, transactional sound, and miniature sculpture, probing the memory of “home” as an impossible “virtual” architecture. Amidst an all-consuming installation that plays with scale and proportion, the eponymous video work, presented on an architectural stage, places the viewer behind the camera. The narrative of the video unfolds inside a staircase that is perceived as a *Huis Clos*, a never-ending loop, in which the viewer encounters “architectural ghosts”. These ghosts deviate from the stand-in human silhouettes that oftentimes populate contemporary architectural models, providing us with a sense of depth and scale. The figures in *The Unhomely* thus become actors themselves, pointing towards the daily lives of their imagined inhabitants, whether real or fictional, and uniting the past and the present.

Two further elements of the installation implicate the presence of the viewer in the production of the work. A scaled miniature of the film’s staircase represents an impossible replica, leaving the viewer with a confusing desire to compare their own position to that in the film and the model. A quotation from both the film and the model, the architectural stage used by Kilfa functions as a Foley instrument that reacts and reverberates to the movement of the audience, adding a sonic and spatial dimension to the experience of the work. Traditionally, Foley is a postproduction technique used to enhance the audio quality in moving images by overlaying synchronized studio recordings of everyday sounds. In Kilfa’s work, however, it serves to further heighten the viewer’s sense of complicity in the production of the work.

The exhibition *The Unhomely* by Atiéna R. Kilfa is co-produced in partnership with Camden Art Centre in London, where an iteration of the exhibition will be staged from January to March 2023. The exhibition is generously supported by the Trampoline Association in support of the French art scene, Paris and supported by Institut français Deutschland / Bureau des arts plastiques and Galerie Neue Alte Brücke, Frankfurt am Main.

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KW Institute for Contemporary Art is institutionally supported by the Senate Department for Culture and Europe.

The exhibitions and projects in the Fall Program 2022 take place in collaboration with and/or are supported by:



Michel Majerus Estate

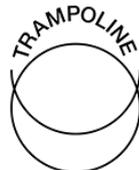
KUNSTVEREIN  
IN  
HAMBURG



n.b.k.



Camden Art Centre  
Arkwright Road  
London NW3



Titles and dates are subject to change.

As of: 28 September 22