



**Press kit**  
***Martin Wong***  
***Win McCarthy***  
***Karen Lamassonne***

## **Content**

Press Release .....	2
<b>Martin Wong</b> <b><i>Malicious Mischief</i></b>	
Curatorial text .....	6
Biography.....	9
Public Program .....	9
<b>Win McCarthy</b> <b><i>Innenportrait</i></b>	
Artist text.....	11
Biography.....	12
Public program.....	12
<b>Karen Lamassonne</b> <b><i>Ruido / Noise</i></b>	
Curatorial text .....	13
Biography.....	15
Public program.....	15
Education and Art Mediation .....	17
Upcoming Exhibitions .....	18
General Information .....	19

# Press Release

## Spring program 2023

KW Institute for Contemporary Art is pleased to present its Spring program of 2023 with a focus on *interiority* and *exteriority*. These reflections on the physical and psychological conditions of architecture and city planning inform the work of **Martin Wong**, **Win McCarthy**, and **Karen Lamassonne**, in which notions of 'the self' are being constructed.



Martin Wong, *Tell My Troubles to the Eight Ball (Eureka)*, 1978–81. Courtesy of the Martin Wong Foundation and P.P.O.W, New York © Martin Wong Foundation.

**Martin Wong**

***Malicious Mischief***

25 February – 14 May 23

Curators: Krist Gruijthuisen, Agustín Pérez Rubio

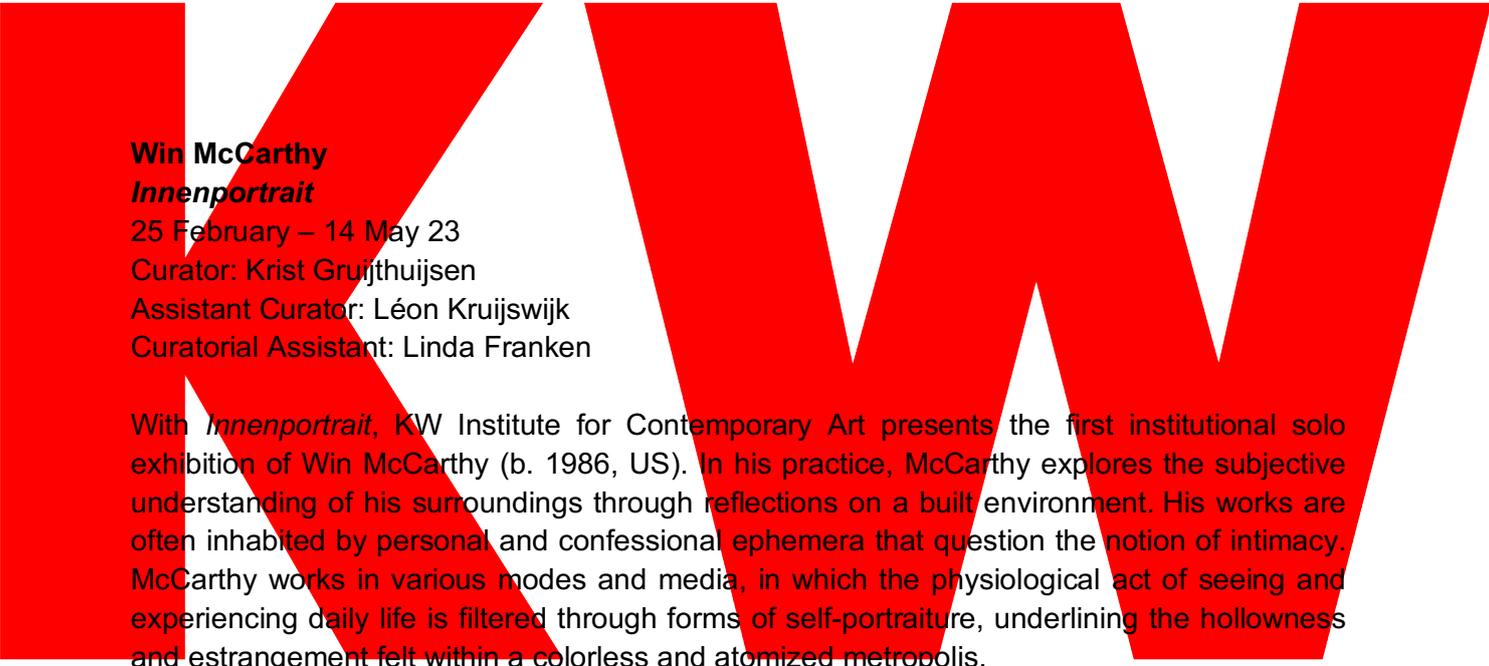
Assistant Curator: Sofie Krogh Christensen

Martin Wong (1946–1999, US) is recognized for his depictions of social, sexual, and political scenographies in the United States from 1970s to 1990s. Poetically weaving together narratives of queer existence, marginal communities, and urban gentrification, Wong stands out as an important countercultural voice at odds with the art establishment's reactionary discourse at the time. Heavily influenced by the artist's immediate surroundings, Wong's practice merges the visual languages of Chinese iconography, portraiture, landscape, urban poetry, graffiti, carceral aesthetics, and sign language. His work offers a valuable insight into decisive periods of recent United States history as told through its changing urban landscapes, unfolding hidden desires, and complexities. In the role of an urban chronicler and a critical observer, Wong poetically portrays social realism, transcending harsh realities while opening up spaces of beauty and inclusion. Within these spaces, the existing social relations of class, race, and sexual orientation can be reconsidered and reshaped.

*Martin Wong – Malicious Mischief* is divided in thematic rooms, guided by Wong's own artistic biography: the exhibition reflects on Wong's multilayered universe as seen through his early paintings, poems and sculptures made in the euphoric 1960s and early 1970s environments of San Francisco and Eureka, California, where he grew up as the only son of American-born Chinese parents, his iconic 1980s and 1990s paintings from his time as a citizen of a dilapidated New York City, as well as his reminiscences on the imagery of the East and West Coast Chinatowns, made prior to his premature death from an AIDS/HIV-related illness. The exhibition is named after a series of significant eponymous works from 1991–98 that broadly represent the concept of the "outlaw," which Wong embraced and fetishized throughout his career, from the juvenile delinquents of Manhattan's Lower East Side (Loisaida) to his befriended graffiti artists operating at night.

*Martin Wong – Malicious Mischief* is the first international extensive display of the artist's work outside of the United States, initiated by KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin and produced in collaboration with Museo Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo (CA2M), Móstoles, Madrid; Camden Art Centre, London; and Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. The exhibition is accompanied by an extensive publication, co-published with Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König.

*Martin Wong – Malicious Mischief* is made possible through support from the Terra Foundation for American Art. The publication and the exhibition at KW are funded by Kulturstiftung des Bundes (German Federal Cultural Foundation). Kulturstiftung des Bundes (German Federal Cultural Foundation) is funded by the Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien (German Federal Commissioner for Culture and the Media). With the generous support of The Martin Wong Foundation, P.P.O.W, New York, KAWS, and Galerie Buchholz.



**Win McCarthy**  
***Innenportrait***

25 February – 14 May 23

Curator: Krist Gruijthuisen

Assistant Curator: Léon Kruijswijk

Curatorial Assistant: Linda Franken

With *Innenportrait*, KW Institute for Contemporary Art presents the first institutional solo exhibition of Win McCarthy (b. 1986, US). In his practice, McCarthy explores the subjective understanding of his surroundings through reflections on a built environment. His works are often inhabited by personal and confessional ephemera that question the notion of intimacy. McCarthy works in various modes and media, in which the physiological act of seeing and experiencing daily life is filtered through forms of self-portraiture, underlining the hollowness and estrangement felt within a colorless and atomized metropolis.

The exhibition *Innenportrait* is composed entirely of new work, which focuses on the collision between opticality and intellect and evokes ideas around embodiment, perception, and remembrance. Sculptures made of conjoined prescription eyeglasses populate the rooms of the exhibition. They are the disembodied prostheses of collective vision, straining for clarity. Juxtaposed is a large series of photograms, which depict scenes both personal and universal: domestic interiors, cityscapes, a dog, the birth of a child. All are subtly distorted, either by hand or through collage, in order to further ideas around commonality and individuality.

Finally, various simple, provisional sculptures are installed in front of arrays of photographic lights. These works anticipate their own documentation and accept the primacy of the photograph. By making the photography equipment visible, McCarthy addresses the issue of how art and life are observed, documented, and proliferated. The unequivocal indirectness of one's ever-shifting relationship to the subject matter is made palpable.

If subjectivity has been pivotal in McCarthy's previous work, this new body of work presents a vision of contemporary subjective experience in disarray, in which seeing, understanding, and documenting collapse into one another.

McCarthy's first publication, *Common Ruin*, which reflects his work through personal writings, accompanies the exhibition and is co-published with Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König.

**Karen Lamassonne**

***Ruido / Noise***

25 February – 14 May 23

Curator: Krist Gruijthuisen

Assistant Curator: Léon Kruijswijk

Curatorial Assistant: Linda Franken

*Ruido / Noise* is the first solo exhibition by the Colombian-American artist Karen Lamassonne (b. 1954, US) in Europe and is collaboratively presented with Swiss Institute, New York, and Medellín Museum of Modern Art – MAMM. The exhibition brings together paintings, drawings, collages as well as videos that Lamassonne created between 1974 and today.

Many works of Lamassonne, like her early watercolor series entitled *Baños* (Bathrooms, 1978-81), are often situated in domestic spaces like bathrooms, bedrooms, kitchens, and hallways. As a woman, she playfully questions notions of self-portraiture and self-representation by concealing and revealing the self. Lamassonne has tended to describe these paintings as self-portraits, though the figure is usually anonymized shown only from the shoulders down or from the back.

In 1984, Lamassonne conceived *Ruido* (Noise), which has been realized for the first time on the occasion of the traveling exhibition. Television screens displaying ‘noise’ are used to light several paintings installed around them, each depicting a part of a woman’s body illuminated by the glow of the screen.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Lamassonne became closely connected to the Grupo de Cali (Cali Group), a group of filmmakers who heralded the New Latin American Cinema and had a lasting influence on cinema production. Among many other capacities, Lamassonne was responsible for the art direction for *Pura Sangre* (1982), directed by Luis Ospina, and the German-Colombian production *Kalt in Kolumbien* (1985), directed by Dieter Schidor. On view are selected scenes from Lamassonne’s storyboard for *Pura Sangre*, a horror thriller centering on a rich sugar magnate who survives on the fresh blood of murder victims.

In later works, like the *Homenaje a Cali* (Homage to Cali) series (1989), Lamassonne would move towards depicting the tension between the intimacy of sensual and sexual bodies in public urban spaces. This series reflects the importance of the cinematic to her practice, whilst recalling earlier works in which bodies were drawn into landscapes.

In 2019, the artist began revisiting her collection of postcards and, during the lockdowns in 2020, extending the imagery on the front of the cards in surreal directions. Similarly, she began creating drawings and sculptures of “hairy” or “monster” hands. These resemble props or costumes from movies that Lamassonne might have worked on in the past.

The travelling exhibition is supported by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

# Martin Wong

## Malicious Mischief

### Curatorial text

Room 1–4  
**Beginnings on the West Coast**

In the early years of his artistic practice, Martin Wong studied ceramics and printmaking at Humboldt State University, California. He was likewise influenced by the passion he shared with his mother, Florence Wong Fie, for antique and pop-cultural objects, as well as ancient Chinese ceramics. Wong found a kinship in Chinese cultural expressions in calligraphy, which became an aesthetic that he would continuously adapt in his poetry scrolls.

In the late 1960s, Wong became part of the theater group The Cockettes, and in the early 1970s he joined their breakout group Angels of Light Free Theater producing sets and costumes that reflected the collective's interest in expanded perceptions, utopia, Hindu Kaliyuga, psychedelics, and queer self-expression. Drawing on the iconography he encountered during his travels to Europe, India, and Afghanistan, Wong developed an impressive symbolic system inspired by Tantric painting and Kufic architecture, amongst others.

During his formative years on the West Coast, Wong dived into the American counterculture with its drugs, free love, collectivity, and theatrical performance, portraying both the urban environments he ventured through as well as the characters he met along the way. In 1975, Wong establishes his "Human Instamatic" portrait business, charging \$5 for a hand-drawn portrait and \$25 for a painted one. His community-oriented drawings from this period focus on capturing Eureka's crab fishermen, SRO hotel lobbies, bars, and friends in a community threatened by gentrification.

As Wong's practice turned more towards painting, he started exploring the visual tropes of 'chance' and 'destiny,' by including stellar constellations, dice, and the eight ball, as seen in his painting *Tell My Troubles to the Eight Ball (Eureka)* (1978).

Eventually breaking with the Angels of Light Free Theater in 1973, he moved back to Humboldt County. In 1978, Wong decided to pursue his artistic career and moved to New York.

Room 5–6  
**Moving to New York**

In New York, Martin Wong settled in the former Meyer's Grand Hotel at the South Street Seaport in 1978, where he would remain for nearly three years, working as a night porter, which provided him free lodging. Using a hotel room as studio, Wong dedicated himself to the medium of painting and kept an fast production pace, which would last for the remainder of his

career. Moving from the colorful and utopic San Francisco to the more bleak, dilapidated New York City, the artist's first years on the East Coast became an intimate period dominated by isolation, reading, listening, and learning. He was a voracious consumer of books on astrology, mythology, Asian identity, sports, male erotica, magazines, and newspapers. His seminal work *My Secret World (1978–1981)* (1984) refers to these early years at Meyer's Hotel through a *trompe l'oeil*, providing a voyeuristic view into his world.

Like in San Francisco, Wong drew his inspiration from his immediate surroundings and the encounters he made in these urban settings. One day, while riding the subway, a Deaf person from New York approached the artist with a pamphlet displaying the American Sign Language (ASL) fingerspelling alphabet. Using ASL to spell out salacious headlines about the media spectacles as reported in tabloid newspapers like *Weekly World News*, Wong created further seminal works such as *Psychiatrists Testify: Demon Dogs Drive Man to Murder* (1980) and *Clones of Bruce Lee* (1981). This moment would prove to be pivotal to the artist's practice, and the gesticulating hands of ASL would become a signature aesthetic and a keystone in his cosmos of codes, providing voices to his peers and local minority groups.

Room 7–8

### **Loisaida**

In 1982, Martin Wong moved to Ridge Street on Manhattan's Lower East Side, known at the time as 'Loisaida.' Loisaida was a working-class neighborhood predominantly inhabited by Puerto Ricans surrounded by dilapidated architecture, petty criminality, drugs, and burgeoning urban creativity. Wong soon found an affinity with the Nuyorican (a composite of 'New York' and 'Puerto Rican') community and frequented a number of the alternative cultural spaces. He struck up decisive friendships with its artists – both graffiti artists as well as poets.

At The Crime Show at ABC No Rio in 1983, Wong met the Nuyorican poet, playwright, and actor Miguel Piñero (1946–1988), and the two developed a deep bond with each other. Piñero, who also was a petty criminal, drug dealer, and community activist, introduced Wong to Loisaida. Being the co-founder of the 'Nuyorican Poets Café' on the Lower East Side and the author of the theater play *Short Eyes* (1974), Piñero became a lasting inspiration for Wong, who began incorporating poetry and imagery from Piñero's work into his paintings. A good example of this mixture can be seen in *Portrait of Miguel Piñero* (1982); *King Heroin* (1983–1984); or *Pedro's Lament* (1984).

The reddish-brown tenement bricks found on most of the architecture of the Lower East Side dominated Wong's aesthetic during this period – often in the manner of tableaux vivants such as *No Es Lo Que Has Pensado... (It's Not What You Think...)* (1984) – and became symbolic of his practice in general.

From 1982–1988, Wong's paintings and painted objects mostly depicted the social reality of his direct surroundings – urban decay and displacement due to gentrification as well as street culture, crimes, drug addiction or the constant presence of fire and police sirens – but also a life amidst a community of immigrants, who were building a new home for themselves despite all odds. This can be seen in the architectural views of *Nocturne at Ridge Street and Stanton* (1987) or in *Chinese Laundry (A Portrait of the Artist's Parents)* (1984). On the other hand, Wong's erotic fantasies about Latino men slowly became more explicitly present within the paintings. We can also observe it as an abstract form in paintings such as *Heaven* (1988).

Room 9

### **The Last Picture Show**

In 1986, Martin Wong opened his third exhibition at the Semaphore Gallery, directed by Barry Blinderman, titled *The Last Picture Show*. Throughout the previous year, he had begun to paint life-size façades and storefronts – closed establishments with their lowered shutters and gates. Wong presented an immersive installation composed by ten storefronts standing on the floor, physically reconstructing the walk along Avenue B and portraying the urban change of the Lower East Side. A selection of these original paintings are on show here.

In the press release, Wong proclaimed that “everything must go.” The installation questioned the destruction and reconstruction that was brought to the area through increasing gentrification.

Room 10

### **Prisoners, Policemen, Firemen, and Graffiti Artists**

Through his affinity with Miguel Piñero and his friendship circle, Wong was frequently confronted with the reality of the American police, prisons, and the surveillance state as well as the influence of race, class, and sexual politics on power dynamics, among inmates, and between inmates and supervisors. In paintings like *Penitentiary Fox* (1988) – a tribute to Piñero after his death that year, who is portrayed in the lower center of the image, and to his fellow prisoners/cast members of his play *Short Eyes* – or in *Lock Up* (1985) and *Malicious Mischief* (1991), Wong offered an unadorned view into the insides of prisons, in which occupied cells, spaces of intimacy, violence and homosexual desire, are revealed. Especially within those infrastructures that maintain hegemonic power structures, such as urban planning, police, and prison state or fire departments, Wong continuously found room for intimacy, eroticism, desire, and imagination – as seen in *I Really Like the Way Firemen Smell* (1988) or *Come Over Here Rockface* (1994), among others. This critical appropriation also connects him to tactics of empowerment of New York’s gay scene at the time.

While living in Loisaída, Wong formed long-lasting friendships with prominent members the New York graffiti scene—like Christopher “Daze” Ellis, Sharp, LA2, and Lady Pink—most of whom he met through his part-time job at the legendary store Pearl Paint on Chinatown’s Canal Street. He later expanded his collecting practice by adding an impressive number of graffiti sketchbooks, or piece books, from this group of artists, financially supporting the scene—and in 1988, Wong inaugurated the short-lived Museum of American Graffiti with friend Peter Broda. Wong’s graffiti collection was later donated to the Museum of the City of New York in 1994.

Room 11

### **The last years: The Chinatown Paintings and After**

Revisiting a subject he first explored in the 1970s, Wong created an expansive body of work about Chinatown in the early 1990s – a time of politically charged, ethnicity-driven interest in identity. Both drawing on the imageries from New York’s Chinatown as well as that of San Francisco – *Grant Avenue, San Francisco* (1992) – Wong would likewise integrate personalities, sceneries, and symbols that do not reflect the authentic reality of their inhabitants, but instead reproduce a perfect truism of pop-cultural Chinese-American imaginaries, as seen in *Bruce Lee in the Afterworld* (1991). Drawing on family and collective

memories from the 1930s to the present, these paintings were both an effort to reminisce his childhood and an active attempt to rewrite his history. His paintings of the Statue of Liberty are a fine illustration of the social projection of immigrant people in the USA. In his work, Wong continued to show a fascination with the multiplicity of meanings shared by the erotic, the astrological and the ancient.

In 1994, Wong was hospitalized for pneumonia, which quickly revealed itself to be an HIV/AIDS-related illness. Diagnosed with an advanced stage of the virus, Wong decided to return to his parents' home in San Francisco to benefit from advanced medicine and his network of friends and family. Despite his rapidly deteriorating health, Wong continued to paint in his family home. On the day of his death, August 12, 1999, he completed his last painting, *Did I Ever Have a Chance?* (1999), which depicts the iconic kidnapped-and-abducted Patty Hearst transformed into Kali, the Hindu goddess of death and time.

## Biography

Martin Wong (1946-1999) was born in Portland, Oregon and raised in San Francisco, California. He studied ceramics at Humboldt State University, graduating in 1968. Wong was active in the performance art groups The Cockettes and Angels of Light Free Theater before moving to New York in 1978. He exhibited for two decades at notable downtown galleries including EXIT ART, Semaphore, and P·P·O·W, among others, before his passing in San Francisco from an AIDS related illness.

His work is represented in the collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, Whitney Museum of American Art (all New York). As well as Cleveland Museum of Art, Art Institute of Chicago, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among others. The exhibition *Human Instamatic* opened at the Bronx Museum of The Arts in November 2015, before traveling to the Wexner Center for the Arts in 2016 and the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive in 2017.

## Public Program

### **Curator's tour:**

**With Sofie Krogh Christensen**

25 February 23, 4 pm

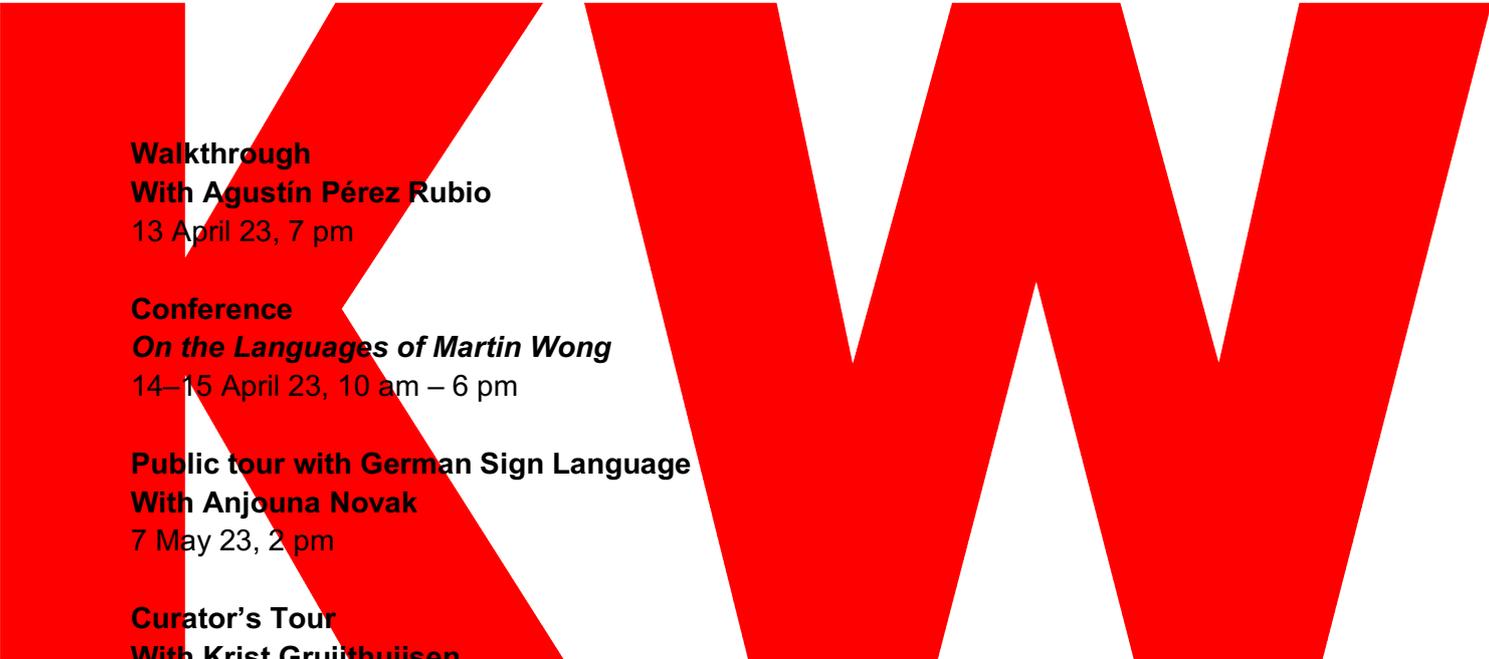
### **Screening**

**Marlis Momber**

***Viva Loisaída***

moderated and commented by Agustín Pérez Rubio

29 March 23, 7 pm



**Walkthrough**  
**With Agustín Pérez Rubio**  
13 April 23, 7 pm

**Conference**  
***On the Languages of Martin Wong***  
14–15 April 23, 10 am – 6 pm

**Public tour with German Sign Language**  
**With Anjouna Novak**  
7 May 23, 2 pm

**Curator's Tour**  
**With Krist Gruijthuisen**  
10 May 23, 5 pm

**Focus Tour**  
**With Raoul Zöllner**  
10 May 23, 5 pm

**Public Guided Tours**  
Sunday, 26 February 23, 4 pm / in English  
Saturday, 18 March 23, 4 pm / in English  
Sunday, 19 March 23, 4 pm / in German  
Saturday, 8 April 23, 4 pm / in English  
Sunday, 9 April 23, 4 pm / in German  
Saturday, 29 April 23, 4 pm / in English  
Sunday, 30 April 23, 4 pm / in German

# Win McCarthy

## *Innenportrait*

### Artist text

On closer inspection, there was simply no edge to the photograph at all. Instead, there was only a constantly expanding field of inclusion. It just kept going and going. The more you looked, the more detail was available. Its panorama was so immense, so total, that everything was pictured. Its focal point was infinite. Periphery and center were one. There was no emphasis, only peace, and with that, a resounding unity. There was no depth of field whatsoever, just simultaneous resolution. Each color was also another, distinct yet interchangeable. And all relational possibilities existed simultaneously. Large was also small. Wide was also narrow. Full was also empty. And yet these collapsed dualities had a groundedness about them. They felt natural, true to themselves, even, earthy. Since, yes, it was a landscape in some sense. It had to be, with all it contained. And there were individuals of every order and their infinite copies, but they were the same. Facade was the same as substrate. The most basic shapes, the building blocks, were no different than their wildest, most exaggerated embellishments. Yet, strange as it may sound, we saw all this with no feeling because, more strangely, nothing in this photograph, in all its infinite dimensionality, had any meaning associated with it. There was no possibility of recognition. No naming. Just supreme opticality, all therein touched by an exactly equal amount of light and shade. And stranger still, we, too, who were looking, we were included, and we were as seamlessly dispersed as all the rest. And we saw as one, and as another. No one was. Sight was diffused. Eyes were pictured but never looked through. There was no mind at all. But this had to be the case, because there was no distinction. All the ways of understanding that we had developed, all the devices, the modes, these were all superfluous. They were on view, of course, but they were of no utility. There was no use at all, only being. And all we had wondered about, whether it was all so simple or so infinitely complex, whether a line could exist without two points, whether, whether, whether. The answer was always "*of course.*" True was false. All was at once. And our feet were no different than the floor, and it went on and on, on and on like this, the unity, the oneness, the peace, on and on and on, but it didn't mean there was no reason to look, or not to look. This was a photograph.

# Biography

Win McCarthy (b. 1986, US) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. His practice includes installation, photography, and sculpture, and is often accompanied by an extensive writing process. McCarthy has presented solo exhibitions at Galerie Neu, Berlin (2021), at Atlantis, Marseille, and Svetlana, New York (both 2019), Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam (2018), Silberkuppe, Berlin (2017), and Off Vendome, Düsseldorf (2013). He furthermore participated in a number of group shows, among them *I think I Look More like the Chrysler Building* at Vleeshal, Middelburg (2021), *Haunted Haus*, Swiss Institute, New York (2020), *Trouble in Paradise. Collection Rattan Chadha*, Kunsthal Rotterdam (2019), *Mirror Cells*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2016), *Takashi Murakami's Superflat*, Yokohama Museum of Art, Yokohama (2016), and *Puddle, pothole, porthole*, SculptureCenter, New York (2014).

## Public program

### Sound performance:

**Ellen Arkbro und Marcus Pal**

*Interharmonicity*

26 February 23, 5 pm

### Focus Tour:

**With Sarah Steiner**

5 April 23, 5 pm

### Curator's tour:

**With Léon Kruijswijk**

27 April 23, 7 pm

### Book launch and reading:

*Common Ruin*

30 April 23, 5 pm

### Public Guided Tours

Saturday, 4 March 23, 4 pm / in English

Sunday, 5 March 23, 4 pm / in German

Saturday, 25 March 23, 4 pm / in English

Sunday, 26 March 23, 4 pm / in German

Saturday, 15 April 23, 4 pm / in English

Sunday, 16 April 23, 4 pm / in German

Saturday, 13 May 23, 4 pm / in English

Sunday, 14 May 23, 4 pm / in German

# Karen Lamassonne

## *Ruido / Noise*

### Curatorial text

*Ruido / Noise* is the first international survey of the work of Colombian American artist Karen Lamassonne (b. 1954, New York), a central figure of the male-dominated art and film scenes in Colombia in the 1970s and 80s. Throughout her career, Lamassonne has maintained a focus on self-portraiture and depictions of intimacy. The exhibit at KW encompasses contributions to both art and cinema and ranges from her earliest to most recent work. It shows Lamassonne's radical, longstanding commitment to portraying women as actively desiring subjects. From tiled bathrooms, where a room of one's own can be found behind locked doors, to urban bridges and parks, where erotic encounters are presented in a shifting sociocultural landscape, many of her paintings, photographs, collages, and videos depict the city's sensual life in public and private spaces.

The earliest works in the exhibition are pencil drawings and airbrush paintings and include subjects and motifs that she would continue to pursue throughout her career. *Paisaje* (Landscape), from 1975, is one of a series of airbrush paintings that render figures at the scale of vast landscapes. Other early drawings include fragmented body parts that take on the attributes of other organisms such as a pair of hands in the form of a bird as seen in *Vuelo* (Flight), 1974, or ears that appear to grow like crops from the soil in *Conchas* (Ears), 1974.

In the artist's early watercolor series entitled *Baños* (Bathrooms, 1978–81), a lone, naked woman is seen in a decoratively tiled bathroom and an atmosphere of cool privacy. Lamassonne has tended to describe these paintings as self-portraits, though the figure is usually anonymized, shown only from the shoulders down or from the back, posing on toilets and bidets, and in showers and baths. Though the washy pigment is delicate, there is a matter-of-factness to the paintings. They caused a small scandal when they were shown at the Galería del Club de Ejecutivos in Cali in 1979, when the exhibition had to shut down prematurely after some of the "executives"—the men who used the space for lectures and meetings—felt unable to go about their business with such "obscenities" in view. Given that the paintings are far from obscene when viewed alongside canonized examples from art history, it seems more likely that the implied associations between women's bodies and bathroom fixtures were what troubled these men the most. Being in the limbo of dirty and clean, the figures described a boundary that was quickly policed in the name of female propriety.

Many of Lamassonne's paintings during this period feature domestic spaces, depicted in a manner that renders them subjective. Patterned bathroom tiles, wallpapers, soft furnishings, bookshelves, messy sinks, ovens, and toilets become flat and pictorial, creating a sense of a still life that is an extension of the artist. When she includes herself in these scenes of imagistic interiority, the body is folded into its environment and rendered continuous with it. This effect is particularly apparent when the scene features mirrors, which throw multiple reflections across the picture. In addition to paintings, Lamassonne also produced numerous

photographic self-portraits, some of which recall motifs from her earlier paintings such as the body in the bath. Several of these photographs have a comic note to them, such as the photograph of a person sticking their head in a refrigerator or the portrait of the artist wearing an improvised garment made from a watermelon.

Her interest in self-portraiture is continued across media in *Ruido* (Noise), an installation realized in this exhibition for the first time since it was first proposed by Lamassonne back in 1984. Television screens are installed to illuminate several paintings around them, each depicting a body that is lit up by the glow of the white noise from the screens. One of the televisions plays a video recording of a lonely winter the artist spent when living in New York City. Continuing her focus on public and private spaces, she films her body in a variety of environments and temperatures, including the freezing city snow.

Cali was home to an energetic film scene in the 1970s, which gathered around clubs such as Cine Club de Cali, founded in 1969 by the writer Andrés Caicedo, a celebrated young novelist who later co-founded and directed the film journal *Ojo al Cine* (1974-76). Lamassonne was part of a network of artists and filmmakers who became known as the *Grupo de Cali* (Cali Group), most often associated with directors Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo, who made their first film together during the 1971 Pan American Games in Cali and worked together on films such as *Agarrando Pueblo* (The Vampires of Poverty) from 1977. The group often employed popular B-movie genres such as horror or crime to create political allegories that skewered mainstream Colombian cinema. Lamassonne was Ospina's partner for many years and worked closely with the group on several films as an editor, art director, and actor. Her credits include editing and acting on *Carne de tu Carne* (dir. Mayolo, 1983) and creating the storyboard and art direction for *Pura Sangre* (Pure Blood) (dir. Luis Ospina, 1982), on which she also worked as assistant director and assistant editor. Displayed here are selected scenes from Lamassonne's storyboard for *Pura Sangre*, a horror thriller centering on a rich sugar magnate who survives on the fresh blood of murder victims. Following her experiences with cinema and storyboarding, Lamassonne began taking photographic series with narrative sequences, following unidentified bodies in playful, sensual, or ambivalent scenarios. In the series *Sueños Húmedos* (Wet Dreams) from 1987, the artist highlights elements of the images in colorful crayon, suggesting heat or energy emanating from the figures. As in many of her earlier paintings, anonymous legs stand in for entire bodies, entangled with others or lying on the floor.

The profound influence of filmmaking on her art is visible in Lamassonne's cinematic paintings, including the *Cali* series (1989). These works feature giant lovers dominating the lurid city skyline in scenes reminiscent of *Attack of the 50-Foot Woman* (dir. Nathan Juran, 1958). This well-known pop cultural association as well as the paintings' palette and scale are reflective of the use of B-movie tropes in Caliwod cinema as well as recalling the artist's earliest works, in which bodies were rendered at the scale of landscapes. The paintings prominently feature the city, Cali, which had undergone a vast urbanization project in the run-up to the 1971 Pan American games, creating novel ways of anonymously navigating and seeking out pleasure in the city.

In recent years, Lamassonne has been working through her archive. After her long-time partner Luis Ospina passed away in 2019, the artist began revisiting her collection of postcards and, during the lockdowns in 2020, extending the imagery on the front of the cards in surreal and surprising directions. Similarly, she began creating drawings and sculptures of "hairy" or

“monster” hands. These resemble props or costumes from movies that Lamassonne might have worked on in the past, but they are also connected to the myths of the monstrous spirits of the Colombian countryside, such as the *madre monte* or the *patasola*.

*Ruido / Noise* is curated by Krist Gruijthuijsen and organized in partnership with Swiss Institute, New York; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; and Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín. The exhibition is made possible with the generous support of the Terra Foundation for American Art.

## Biography

Karen Lamassonne (b. 1954, US) currently lives and works in Atlanta, GA. Born and raised in a multicultural and multilingual environment, Lamassonne has lived and worked in the United States, Colombia, France, Germany, and Italy. In her career as a painter, she combines other artistic media such as film, video, and photography. She also works in design, theater, and music. Lamassonne has had solo exhibitions at the Museo de Arte Moderno la Tertulia, Cali (1989 and 2017), Museo Rayo, Roldanillo (2019), and Facultad de Artes ASAB, Bogotá (2019). Recent group shows include *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985* at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, the Brooklyn Museum, New York, and Pinacoteca, São Paulo, and *The Art of Disobedience* at the Museo de Arte Moderno, Bogotá (2018), as well as *Voces íntimas. Relatos e imágenes de mujeres artistas* at the Museo Nacional, Bogotá (2016–17).

## Public program

### Walkthrough

With Karen Lamassonne

2 March 23, 7 pm

### Screening

*Kalt in Kolumbien*

23 March 23, 7 pm

In cooperation with ACUDkino

### Screening

*Carne de tu carne*

20 April 23, 7 pm

In cooperation with ACUDkino

### Curator's tour

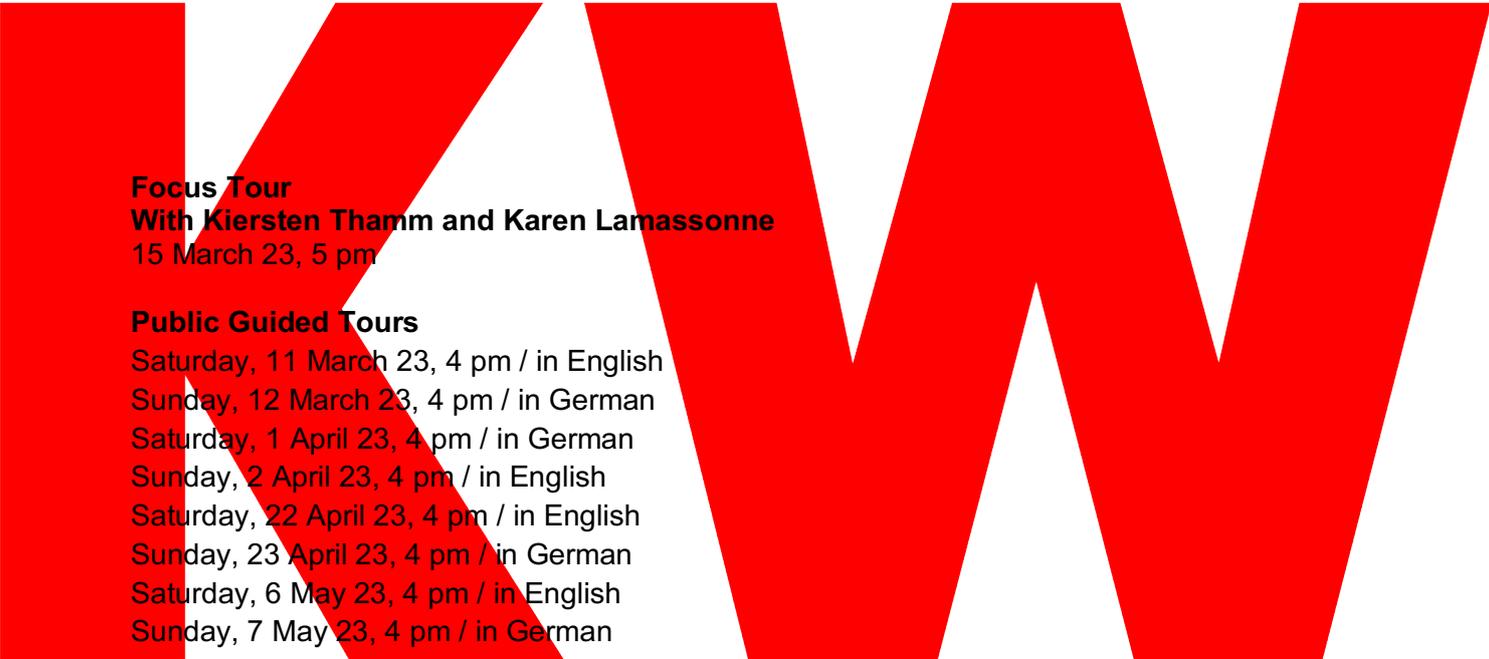
With Léon Kruijswijk

27 April 23, 7 pm

### Screening

*It all started at the end*

14 May 23, 7 pm



**Focus Tour**  
**With Kiersten Thamm and Karen Lamassonne**  
15 March 23, 5 pm

**Public Guided Tours**

Saturday, 11 March 23, 4 pm / in English  
Sunday, 12 March 23, 4 pm / in German  
Saturday, 1 April 23, 4 pm / in German  
Sunday, 2 April 23, 4 pm / in English  
Saturday, 22 April 23, 4 pm / in English  
Sunday, 23 April 23, 4 pm / in German  
Saturday, 6 May 23, 4 pm / in English  
Sunday, 7 May 23, 4 pm / in German

# Education and Art Mediation

KW Institute for Contemporary Art's education and art mediation program takes up themes and questions from the institution's wide-ranging artistic exhibition and event program and develops them further together with visitors, children, youth and adults trying to expand in its own formats on themes sparked within the program. This approach is applied in workshops, guided tours, and long-term cooperations with multiple groups. We work with high schools, universities, artists, art mediators, researchers and different communities from Berlin in various formats throughout the year.

Long-term education and mediation projects are developed and realized together with our respective partners. These cooperations aim to build a mutual space for action that appreciates and activates diverse bodies of knowledge and experience and facilitates both collective and individual approaches to different themes and questions related to the artistic program.

## **Easy Language and Discovery Questions**

With the spring program, exhibition content is offered in easy language for the first time. The text can be accessed directly via the website or QR codes in the exhibition. We would like to reach all visitors with our program. For further inspiration, you will also find questions that can be used to discover the exhibition content in a playful way.

## **Dialogs with KW Guides**

Monday-Friday during regular opening hours  
Participation included in the exhibition ticket  
Without prior registration

During the week, KW guides are present in the exhibitions during regular opening hours. Visitors are invited to ask the guides questions, talk to them about the exhibitions and exchange perspectives.

## **Public guided tours at the weekend**

Every Saturday and Sunday, experienced art educators guide visitors through the current exhibitions at KW. The tours take place every weekend in German and English. During a guided tour, only one of the parallel exhibitions is visited at a time, so that the guided tours change every week.

# Upcoming Exhibitions

**Enrico David**

***Destroyed Men Come and Go***

10 June – 20 August 23

**KW Production Series: Emily Wardill**

10 June – 20 August 23

**Hervé Guibert**

***This & More***

10 June – 20 August 23

**Pause: The Noa Eshkol Chamber Dance Group**

25–27 August 23

**Coco Fusco**

***Tomorrow, I Will Become an Island***

14 September 23 – 7 January 24

**Schering Stiftung Award for Artistic Research 2022**

**Kameelah Janan Rasheed**

14 September 23 – 7 January 24

**Metabolic Museum-University**

***SKIN IN THE GAME***

14 September 23 – 7 January 24

# General Information

## Opening Hours

Wednesday–Monday 11 am–7 pm

Thursday 11 am–9 pm

Closed on Tuesday

## Admission

8 € / reduced 6 €

berlinpass holders 4 €

## Press contact

Anna Falck-Ytter

Tel. +49 30 243459-134

press@kw-berlin.de

## KW Institute for Contemporary Art

Auguststraße 69

10117 Berlin

www.kw-berlin.de

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

The exhibitions and projects within the Spring program 2023 are in collaboration with and/or supported by:

**KW**



**TERRA**  
FOUNDATION FOR AMERICAN ART

Funded by the  
German Federal Cultural Foundation



Funded by the Federal Government  
Commissioner for Culture and the Media



**MUSEO  
CENTRO DE ARTE  
DOS DE MAYO**

Camden Art Centre  
Arkwright Road  
London NW3



**SI**



Museo de  
Arte Moderno  
de Medellín

**SIEGESSÄULE**  
WE ARE QUEER BERLIN



Yorck  
Kinogruppe

**arte**

**rbb/KULTUR**

*Titles and exhibition dates are subject to change.*