



## PRESENT CLUB

So, what do you suggest?

**Thursday 19 January 2017**

Round table and new year's drink

Participants: Aleppo, Buenos Tiempos, Int., Enough Room for Space, Eté 78, Etablissement d'en face, GIRLS LIKE US, and Visible.

Moderation: Marie de Gaulejac and Laura Herman

**Friday 20 to Saturday 21 January 2017**

Film programme selected by participants

14:00 to 22:00

Entry: 2 euros

In the wake of political conservatism and neoliberalism in the early 1980ies and in the midst of quickly evolving technologies, many different visions of the future - in film, architecture, and the visual arts - have been imagined. Although we are still far removed from establishing self-sustaining human colonies in space, scenes in Ridley Scott's 1982 film *Blade Runner* might give today's spectators a shiver of déjà vu. Visual manifestations of technocratic governments, social breakdown and dehumanising forces are shockingly reminiscent of the apocalyptic turmoil of 2016. But in the face of Brexit, the US election, Aleppo, post-truth politics, terrorism and impending fascism in Europe, what we need is not an escape to the blank page of the unknown future, but rather a pause in the known present. As Marc Augé has pointed out, the prevailing idea of "the Future" rests on our present fears of the contemporary world. Can we find the courage to discard our new year's wishes and predictions for 2017 in favour of a confrontation with the present time? And more broadly, can we direct our practices toward finding invigorating ways to work together, break down barriers, and resist the hyper-normalisation of hate?

*PRESENT CLUB. So, what do you suggest?* is a new year's event that invites artists, curators, and thinkers to return to the present-day and envision ways to join forces, inside and outside the field of art, on an institutional and human scale. In addition, the invited speakers will propose a selection of films that resonate with or respond to the troubles of our times. A cinema of dark, hopeful and confident present-day perspectives. A programme against feelings of indifference and paralysis.

Full programme:

**Friday 20 January 2017**

**14:00**

*La Cabina*

**Antonio Mercero**

**1972 | 35min**

**Proposed by Olivier Gevart (Eté 78)**

Even though *La Cabina* was created 45 years ago, it is still a very powerful movie today. The Spanish director never offered a unique explanation of the film. He preferred leaving the interpretation to the audience. Various ideas come to mind when watching the film: the manipulation by an invisible, unknown hand; the consequences of a society constantly looking for entertainment and having fun, and that has stopped to think; the inability of an individual who is part of a process and of the society, as a whole, to see the big picture and to understand what is going on. *La Cabina* forces us to reflect upon and to react to what we see in our everyday life. It encourages us to act.

*Eté 78 is a private, philanthropic, non-profit and non-commercial art space located in Ixelles, which goals are: helping and encouraging artists to develop projects that allow them to dare, to develop, to try out new ways in their practice and to confront them with a public and engaging in a dialog with our visitors to discuss artworks and the exhibition. In a humble way and with a human size, through visual art, literature, sound, lectures and dance, we believe that artists and specific projects can open new doors and our horizons.*

**15:00**

*The Unity of All Things*

**Alexander Carver and Daniel Schmidt**

**2013 | 97 min**

**Proposed by Enough Room for Space**

*The Unity of All Things* is a work of experimental science fiction about the construction of a particle accelerator on the U.S./Mexico border, and is grappling with questions of self and other by employing particle physics as a metaphor for the morphing nature of human identity. The film engages the utopian impulses of the genre, not through the imagining of another world, but through the rendering of this world as Other. All subjects are treated as alien, or as radical others, who search for, or advance different ideological, psychological, or sexual ideals of belonging. Subjects oscillate between the contemplation of past societal traumas and idealizations of futurity that refuse to synthesize or resolve, but instead reveal a troubling satire of the present.

*Enough Room for Space (ERforS) is an interdependent art initiative founded in 2005 by Marjolijn Dijkman and Maarten Vanden Eynde that initiates and coordinates events, residencies, research projects and exhibitions worldwide. ERforS acts as freely as possible, always putting the context and the idea before the medium, challenging the barriers between different disciplines (artistic, scientific or activist).*

**18:00**

*Community Action Center*

**A.K. Burns and A.L Steiner**

**2010 | 69min**

**Proposed by Jessica Gysel and Katja Mater (GIRLS LIKE US)**

GIRLS LIKE US unfolds feminist legacies in a playful yet radical way, mapping possible routes towards a non-patriarchy. Community Action Center does exactly this: infinitely complex gender and performance roles that are both real and fantastical, set to a sound track of music culled from the worldwide sisterhood. It embodies a feminist fantasy where the personal is political (and also sexual), with a focus on intergenerational exchange, re-appropriating our bodies and shining the spotlight upon an international scene of queer artists.

*Jessica Gysel and Katja Mater, together with Sara Kaaman & Marnie Slater are the editors of GIRLS LIKE US, an independent publication turning the spotlight on an international community of women from all genders within arts, culture and activism. Through personal stories, essays and vanguard visuals GIRLS LIKE US unfolds feminist legacies in arts and writing. Mixing politics with pleasure, the magazine is mapping new routes towards a feminist, non patriarchal future.*

**20:00**

*Dark Habits (Entre tinieblas)*

**Pedro Almodóvar**

**1983 | 114min**

**Proposed by Marnie Slater and Alberto García del Castillo (Buenos Tiempos, Inc.)**

The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence have been practicing LGBTQIF+ and aids activism through secular-to-nun transvestism since 1979, when the order was founded by Reverend Mother, Sister Hysterectoria, Sister Missionary Position and Sister Vicious PHB to promulgate universal joy and expiate stigmatic guilt. Since the founding of the order in San Francisco, USA, convents have been formed independently in several cities around the world. Marnie and Alberto, who run Buenos Tiempos, Int. together, met the Sœurs of the Couvent du Nord in Lille, France: Garde Cuisse Silver-Tige de l'Amour, Novice Pupuce du Pubis, Novice Yse Riot, Sœur Didascalie, Sœur Lyric Quand on la Nique, Sœur Salem de la Langue Ardente and Soeur Sissy Phyllis. The Sœurs of the Couvent du Nord have lots to say about the present.

Pedro Almodóvar's *Dark Habits (Entre Tinieblas, 1983)* illustrates a queer and activist approach – politically and aesthetically – to Catholic Sisterhood. A *Time Out London* review described the film as, "slapdash, occasionally slow-moving, haphazardly plotted. That it's also wildly funny, bitchy, affecting and surreal is a tribute to [Almodóvar's] perennial warmth and wit. Nightclub singer Yolanda is impelled, via a bit of drug trouble, into the arms of the Mother Superior of the Convent of Humble Redeemers. Lying low in a spacious cell, decked with the trappings of Catholic kitsch, she finds the demands of the religious life needn't cramp her style too much: Sister Rat pens bodice-rippers, the Mother Superior jacks off in the privacy of her office, Sister Manure has LSD-fuelled religious ecstasies, and Sister Sin is spotted from a bedroom window wrestling with a tiger."

*Dark Habits* will be screened in Spanish, with English subtitles.

*Buenos Tiempos, Int. is an online exhibition space thematically concerned with "faggotry as it is today" – recent shows include Gülsün Karamustafa, Natalie Diaz, Natasha Papadopoulou, Steev Lemercier, Vava Dudu, Juliana Huxtable and CAConrad.*

*It is a collaborative production initiative focused on "power transvestism" – its productions have been presented in Petunia magazine (2014), at La Loge in Brussels (2015) and at Kunstneres Hus in Oslo (2016) between other venues. It is the programmer of an annual Evening of Poetry in Brussels – in 2016, the first edition included Olivia Dunbar, Benjamin Seror and Geo Wyeth – and the organizer of a yearly summer party in collaboration with Girls Like Us magazine, also in Brussels. Alberto García del Castillo and Marnie Slater founded Buenos Tiempos, Int. in 2014.*

Saturday 21 January 2017

**14:00**

*Now: End of Season*

**Ayman Nahle**

**2015 | 20min**

**Proposed by Daniel Blanga-Gubbay (Aleppo)**

While US President Ronald Reagan is out horse riding, the Syrian President Hafiz al-Assad tries in vain to reach him by phone. Ayman Nahle's short film turns us into witnesses of a leaked 1985-phone call between Assad's Secretary and White House staff, while we see the portrait of Garage Izmir, today in Turkey, where Syrian refugees get ready for a journey to the unknown. Some have chosen a café in the area to be the waiting spot, some talk and laugh or contemplate the others. The state: waiting. Will the trip be postponed to another day? In a peculiar overlapping of two temporalities, Nahle creates a poetic postcard raising a question on non-intervention. The film premiered at Berlinale and it is screened now for the first time in Belgium.

*Aleppo is a research platform based in Brussels, engaged in a program of reflections through art and political philosophy. Aleppo opens every season an Imaginary School, a free and open public program, constructed starting from a specific question and curated with arts and reflections in different formats, in the idea that artistic creation is not only an object to reflect on, but also a way to reflect with a different language on the question resonating in the present. Aleppo collaborates with art institutions in the development of public programs.*

**14:30**

*When the Dogs Talked*

**The Karrabing Film Collective**

**d. Elizabeth A. Povinelli, (winner of MIFF Cinema Nova Beat Short Film)**

**2014 | 33:53min**

**Proposed by Matteo Lucchetti and Judith Wielander (Visible)**

As a group of Indigenous adults argue about whether to save their government housing or their sacred landscape, their children struggle to decide how the ancestral Dreaming makes sense in their contemporary lives. Listening to music on their ipods, walking through bush lands, and boating across seas, they follow their parents on a journey to reenact the travel of the Dog Dreaming. Along the way individuals run out of stamina and boats out of gas, and the children press their parents and each other about why these stories matter and how they make sense in the context of Western understandings of evolution, the soundscapes of hip hop, and the technologies of land development. *When the Dogs Talked* mixes documentary and fiction to produce a thoughtful yet humorous drama about the everyday obstacles of structural and racialized poverty and the dissonance of cultural narratives and social forms.) Karrabing Film Collective was the recipient of the 2015 Visible Award. The Visible Award is the first European award for socially engaged artistic practices in a global context.

*Visible is a research project in contemporary art devoted to art work in the social sphere, that aims to produce and sustain socially engaged artistic practices in a global context. visible is a project undertaken by Cittadellarte – Fondazione Pistoletto in collaboration with Fondazione Zegna, curated by Matteo Lucchetti and Judith Wielander.*

**16:30**

*Rocky IV*

**Sylvester Stallone**

**1985 | 91min**

**Proposed by the members of Etablissement d'en face, and represented by Michael Van den Abeele and Margaux Schwarz**

Joseph Beuys once said "Art is a genuinely human medium for revolutionary change in the sense of completing the transformation from a sick world to a healthy one"

- "Yeah, right answers Mike Kelley, laughing, in an interview in 2004, but Beuys had a notion of Art as a curative process (...) I think art is an analytic process that makes you aware of the problems you have".

In 2012, when french president François Hollande got elected, he was eventually proud to say that he was never reading fiction, only essays - through these words - a clear message, "I'm on the side of facts".

Yeah, right. For Present Club at La Loge, Etablissement d'en face chose Sylvester Stallone's *Rocky IV*, because sometimes, it feels good to be able to identify the enemy.

*Etablissement d'en face is an art space located rue Ravenstein 32 in central Brussels, in the shadow of Belgian political, financial and cultural power institutions and opposite the headquarters of a bank and art center Bozar. Here, in the symbolic heart of a nation, the current collective as well as many sympathizing collaborators welcome and accommodate artistic proposals from artists and other poetic individuals. We continue to celebrate every new year together with our tradition of the Pot of Etablissement: an award for "Best Things Seen in the World", which we honor with a Pot of Etablissement. All of these public activities taking place on this spot on planet Earth are fueled by an engagement and commitment by individuals, informed by the interplanetary interferences of Jupiter, Mars, Mercurius, Neptunus, Pluto, Saturnus, Uranus and Venus.*

**20:00**

***Blade Runner***

**Ridley Scott**

**1982 | 117min**

**Proposed by Marie de Gaulejac and Laura Herman (La Loge)**

### **Thank you**

*Present Club. So, what do you suggest?* was made possible thanks to all the participants: Aleppo, Buenos Tiempos, Int., Enough Room for Space, Eté 78, Etablissement d'en face, GIRLS LIKE US, and Visible.

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