

HAPPY HOUR

Paul Abbott
Cécile Emmanuelle Borra
Robert Cervera
Richie Culver
Sally Kindberg
Alana Lake
Alex Roberts
Remi Rough

Curated by
EKCO London /
Roberto Ekholm

Private View: 11 April, 6:30-9pm

12 April – 25 May 2019
2 Melior Place
London SE1 3SZ

Friday 12- 5pm
Saturday 12 - 4pm
Or by appointment

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"HAPPY HOUR"

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HAPPY HOUR brings together eight artists to exhibit at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery's London Bridge project space.

The Melior Place project space is housed within the building's glasshouse architecture and reverberates with the city's unique histories and energy. Sculpture, painting and video work are installed throughout the building to activate a dialogue between the artworks and the architectural space.

HAPPY HOUR allows us to glimpse a space of possibility between work, leisure and the domestic, an example of how this performative cross-boundary 'being-together' can come about through the communal or collective.

From origins dating back to the USS Arkansas American Navy in 1913, the term 'happy hour' derived from The Happy Hour Social, a place for those on board to drink, box and dance. The club addressed the very real need for conviviality, escapism and release from workaday realities.

By the same token, HAPPY HOUR offers a similar invitation to let loose and unwind, and to explore what connects the worlds of politics, work and pleasure.

Alana Lake's *Pleasure Drive* series, (as inspired by Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*), conflates the life and death drives, positing that all life is a movement towards death. In her response to Freud's work, Lake takes a look at the symbolism of objects to convey life, death, hedonism and sexual lust. She captures these tensions in paintings & in glass sculptures of objects such as saddles or motorbike helmets, suggesting speed, power, freedom and an inexhaustible search for meaning.

In this sense, HAPPY HOUR is a space of commonality defined by the means to which we tend to strive towards happiness - to lead a 'happy life' - and highlights the need for communication, the exchange of ideas and meaning-making in order to do so. With reference to relationships, both to oneself as well as to others, the Happy Hour, can be seen as a singular attempt in which to close distance between opposites, to spend time wisely, dancing at the twilight edges of 'working life' and 'private life'.

Paul Abbott and Alex Roberts explore similar lines of enquiry to confront the un-fixedness of who we are. Their focus is on traces of humanity and memory; how the inescapability of our pasts indelibly marks our ability to (re)present our different and changing selves. Living between Berlin and UK, Roberts encounters passengers of the everyday on her travels, observing their body language, human behaviour and tapping into latent sensitivities that lie deep below the surface. These observations transfer to her paintings on silk as she draws our attention to human tangibility through a painterly practice of figuration and abstraction.

Through the use of sculpture, video and drawing, Abbott explores boundaries between image and object with a question of how fragmented narratives may present new discursive possibilities. Merging the character of Robin Hood and O in *Old English Cider*, he recalls childhood memories of family alcoholism with what seems like daydreams of a mythical figure, setting up feedback loops between fiction and reality.

Richie Culver's work is laden with social commentary through the references of entertainment and consumerism. Rap lyrics, branding, sportswear - these are all symbols and aesthetics which invoke certain ideas around contemporary British working-class life. Frank and funny, the paintings and sculptures are filled with anecdotes of leisure time and social identity. There's a relatable quality to this vein of class-marked 'Britishness', irrespective of background and identity, since these everyday objects function as flash points of desire, aspiration and disappointment.

Sally Kindberg plays on the notion of the tragicomic in a society that is both civilised and ridiculous. She uses this humorous approach to tempt us in to explore other, more unsavoury emotions and insights. Extracting particular details of the everyday, we become entranced by finer details in the works, such as waves of immaculate hair or the intense colour of a pint, to the extent that they become peculiarly abstracted.

Remi Rough distils fragments of the world around him into powerful abstract compositions. Wall murals and paintings are infused with street-wise energy and the history of abstract painting, composing marks, shapes and colours to form a new sense of language. Here, parallel timelines of history and present day meet on a multidimensional painterly surface. The site-specific piece at Melior Place, for instance, connects the ground floor with the upstairs "glass" room, effectively dissecting the architectural space.

HAPPY HOUR becomes a place of the carnivalesque, if only for a short while, where rules are temporarily forgotten about, if not actually broken, and where, on release from the tyranny of social norms and roles, there's the possibility of being yourself, or someone different altogether.

Cécile Emmanuelle Borra works predominantly in installation using a variety of media including film, photography, text, wallpaper, textile as well as found objects. Examining the relationship between Desire and the Gaze, Borra's installations position men as object of the female gaze hence posing a challenge to the assumption of binary gender roles. Banal fashion and homeware paraphernalia are commonly re-configured and their readings are altered, they become surreal, a commentary on patriarchy in consumerism and a play on identity.

As we try to divide our lives neatly into 'work time', 'free time', 'me time', 'family time' or 'leisure time', it becomes impossible not to be hypervigilant of time as a precious commodity to conserve and protect. Afterall, it is 'our' time and how we differentiate these slices of life changes depending on our feelings around accomplishment, boredom, efficiency and crucially, those around us. Robert Cervera's work stems from a fascination with the materiality around us and within us. His concrete sculptures use an oppositional dialectic between formlessness and structure to look at flow and system.

For the *Hard Disc* series, concrete is mixed with eye drops, coffee, mouthwash, baby oil. Here the building material used to make permanent structures for our homes and offices are mixed with

consumables such as drinks and toiletries. Their materiality changes but as the compound reacts to one another, they become one unextractable solid form. These discs have transmuted from their original source to become something entirely new, a brand new alloy of identity and data.

Each artist were asked to make a small piece for HAPPY HOUR. Placed in the bookcase on the ground floor as a *Cabinet Curiosity* of Melior Place.

Join us for HAPPY HOUR, a celebration of often opposing ideas and identities, a break from work, from routine, to meet with others, to relax, be yourself, and still make it back in time for dinner.

Roberto Ekholm

About Roberto Ekholm

Roberto Ekholm is an artist and curator who studied dance at Laban Centre, London and Fine Art at Goldsmiths College, London. In 2013 he established his curatorial company EKCO London and is curator at MOCA London. He has curated internationally as well as turning his home into a gallery space.

Recent exhibitions including, Happy Hour , Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London, *Sweep~Landskip*, KINOKINO kunstsäl, Stavanger, *Connubial* , Garborg Centre, Stavanger, *Immerse* , KINOKINO kunstsäl, Stavanger, *Hmmmmm* , HilbertRaum, Berlin, *EKCO Art salon*. He has co-curated with Michael Petry the travelling exhibition *Nature Morte*: Guildhall Art Gallery London 2017-2018, National Museum Wroclaw Poland 2017, Bohusläns Museum, Sweden 2016 and Hå gamle prestegard, Norway 2015. He was an invited speaker at the *Create and Collaborate Symposium*, Hayward Gallery tours, Royal Festival Hall, London 2018. He is giving a gallery talk about Herman Lohe's solo exhibition at Fiumano Clase Gallery London, 16 May 2019. Ekholm is member of the curator project, Hong Kong, Signed judge on The Art of Creativity's Awards in 2016, 2017 and 2018. He currently lives and works in London.

About Kristin Hjellegjerde

Established in 2012, Kristin Hjellegjerde quickly gained recognition as an international gallery dedicated to exhibiting a roster of innovative, international artists, both emerging and established, with strong theoretical and aesthetic bases.

Known for its multicultural curatorial approach, the gallery has, over the past years, fostered close and cooperative relationships with museums and curators worldwide, maintaining a deep devotion to the artists it represents.

Drawing on her own international background, Kristin Hjellegjerde seeks to discover new talents by creating a platform through which they can be exposed to local and international clients. She collaborates with curators and collectors, as well as with developers and architects.

In April 2018 the gallery opened its second space in Berlin. Following this the gallery will expand to a larger space in London by Tower Bridge in 2019/2020. Kristin Hjellegjerde will also be curating a museum exhibit focused on African Artists at Vestfossen, Norway, Spring 2019.

Invite image: Alana Lake, *Sahara Nights*, from the series *Pleasure Drive*, 2019
Oil on canvas with spray paint and epoxy resin, detail.

About Paul Abbott

Paul completed his MA in Fine Art at Chelsea College of Arts, UAL in 2015 and co-founded the artist-collective Disstemma in 2008. He has exhibited in the UK and internationally. Recent inclusions: Three Pillars, Old Chelsea Town Hall, London; Stations of Water, St Paul's Cathedral; What Hat am I Wearing Today?, MOCA London. Awards 2014 Hackney Wicked Open Studios Bursary, 1998 Helen Blair Crosby Award.

www.pabbott.net

About Cécile Emmanuelle Borra

Cécile Emmanuelle Borra is a French born London based artist, graduate of Goldsmiths College. Selected shows include "Kaleidoscopes", Sketch (London), "Helmut Newton Ladies Nights", Royal Academy (London), "Feminist Practices in Dialogue", ICA (London), "We All Have A Problem With Representation", The Showroom (London), "In Whose Eyes", Beaconsfield Gallery (London), "In Between", Saatchi Gallery (London), "Re-Sign", K-salon Gallery (Berlin), "Where The Men Met", Kulturhuset (Stockholm), "Some Like It Wrong", Nuovo Cinema Palazzo, (Rome) and "Lova", Espace Timbaud (Paris).

Residencies and grants include StudioAlfresco @lizziestudioalfresco (London), AA2A at Chelsea College of Arts (London), ULTRAMICHKA (Pau), Firstsite (Colchester) and NFK (Stockholm).

She is Associate Lecturer in Fine Art at UAL, London.

www.cecileemmanuelleborra.weebly.com

About Robert Cervera

Robert Cervera is a London-based artist born in Barcelona. Graduated from the Royal College of Art with an MA in Sculpture, he won the 2014 Kenneth Armitage Young Sculptor Prize for his degree show.

Cervera's work includes sculpture, installation, video and sound, with a strong interest in materiality and our relation to it. He has shown extensively in the UK, Denmark, Netherlands, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal and Mexico.

Selected exhibitions include Yes And, Kelder Projects (London); Tomorrow Starts Here, La Escocesa (Barcelona); Identify your limitations, Vitrine (Basel); Cue Collision, House of Egorn (London); Salon Acme, Zona Maco (México); Outpost Film Open, selected by Ed Atkins (Norwich); Ichor, Danielle Arnaud (London); and Charlottenborg Spring Exhibition, Kunsthall Charlottenborg (Copenhagen).

www.robertcervera.com

About Richie Culver

Richie Culver is London based. Selected exhibitions, c'est sombre vers le nord. Lehmann + Silva, porto.i could have gone pro. Nuart gallery, Stavanger. raga night at the community centre. Zweisieben, Karlsruhe. no one knows me like dawn from the job centre. Humber street gallery, Kingston upon hull. stitchingthecracks. Kristin Hjellegjerde gallery London. with Pedro Matos & Lauren Dicioccio. things that never really worked out – most things. Protein gallery, London. an untitled do. 86 Torstrasse, Berlin. paper cuts, group show. Saatchi gallery, London. the long count. Von Goetz art, London. exhibition #2 - museum of everything. Tate Modern, London.

www.richie-culver.com

About Alana Lake

Alana Lake studied at the Arts University College, Bournemouth between 2001 – 2004 undertaking a BA (Hons) in Photography, she later moved to London embarking on a 3year postgraduate program at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, graduating in 2009. She currently lives and works in Berlin where she runs the award winning curatorial-led project space, GSL Projekt, Berlin (Auszeichnung künstlerischer Projekträume und initiative, 2018).

www.alanalake.co.uk

About Sally Kindberg

The Swedish artist Sally Kindberg studied at Goldsmiths, University of London and remained in London where she now lives and works. Recent and notable exhibitions include 2018 Soft bite, solo show curated by Maria Stenfors, 12 Star Gallery, London. 2016-17 touring exhibition Nature Morte Contemporary Artists Reinvent the Still Life, curated by Michael Petry and Roberto Ekholm, Sweden, Poland, UK. 2018 Not Dream of Islands, selected by John Chilver and Daniel Pettitt, Palfrey Gallery, London. 2018 Secret Charter, The Dulwich Picture Gallery, London. 2017 XIX Cerveira International Art Biennial, Portugal, Anthology 2015, Charlie Smith London. 2014 Sally Kindberg + Philadelphia PD, Peter von Kant, London. Sally Kindberg was part of the touring exhibition Nature Morte.

www.sallykindberg.com

About Alex Roberts

Alex Roberts is a British artist that lives and works between Berlin and the UK.

She exhibits internationally, recent inclusions: Stockpile, Drawing Projects UK; PaintLounge BERLIN; no format Gallery; The Performativity of Painting, The Stephen Lawrence Gallery, Greenwich University Galleries (2018); Control to Collapse, Blyth Gallery; St. Paul's Cathedral; What Hat am I Wearing Today? Paul Abbott and Alex Roberts, MOCA London; Connect: Katowice, Rondo Gallery Katowice, Poland (2017).

Awards, AA2A residency - Bucks New University (2018); Oppenheim-John Downes Memorial Trust; The Eaton Fund (2017); Arts Council England & British Council Grant - The Artists' International Development Fund; HIX Award finalist; short-listed for The Red Mansion Art Prize (all 2016) and Contemporary Visions VI, Beers London (2015).

Curating and facilitating visual art projects is a research method, an extension of her studio practice. Alex completed her MAFA at Chelsea College of Arts (UAL), following a BA (Hons) in Fine Art from The University of Reading. She continues to work at Edge Arts, University of Bath as an Artist Tutor, alongside Drawing Projects UK, The Drawing Week at Bath School of Art & Design, Bath Spa University and new for 2019, Bauhaus Summer School, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar.

www.alexroberts.com

About Remi Rough

Recent exhibitions and commissions include 'Graffuturism' at L'Alternatif, Paris - 2019, 'Morning Dynamics' commission for the MTR, Quarry Bay Station, Hong Kong, 'Volume' at MOCA London - 2018, 'Art from the streets' at The ArtScience Museum, Singapore - 2018, 'Syncopation' at Zimmerling & Jungfleisch Gallery, Saarbrücken - 2018, 'Symphony of systematic minimalism' at Wunderkammern Gallery, Rome - 2017, 'Sound pigments' at Magda Danysz Gallery, Paris - 2017, 'Re-Define' at Dallas Contemporary, Dallas - 2017, 'Post' at Speerstra Gallery, Switzerland - 2016, 'Jidar' at Musée Mohammed VI, Rabat - 2016 and 'MB6' Marrakech Biennale, Morocco - 2016.

www.remirough.com