

NEW
235 BOWERY
NEW YORK NY
10002 USA
MUSEUM

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TEL +1 212.219.1222
FAX +1 212.431.5326
newmuseum.org

PRESS CONTACTS:
Paul Jackson, Communications Director
Nora Landes, Press Associate
press@newmuseum.org
212.219.1222 x209
Andrea Schwan, Andrea Schwan Inc.
917.371.5023
info@andreaschwan.com

For its Spring 2018 Season, the New Museum Presents Solo Exhibitions by Nathaniel Mellors, Alexandra Pirici, Anna Craycroft, and Sara Magenheimer

New York, NY...For its spring 2018 season, the New Museum presents solo exhibitions by **Nathaniel Mellors** and **Alexandra Pirici** in its recently debuted South Galleries, along with an exhibition by **Anna Craycroft**, the artist-in-residence for the Department of Education and Public Engagement's Spring 2018 R&D Season, and a window installation by artist **Sara Magenheimer**.



Nathaniel Mellors, *The Vomiter (Ourhouse)*, 2010. Animatronic sculpture with silicon hose, peristaltic pump, painted silicon, wood, steel, paper pulp, and bucket, dimensions variable. Photo: Alexander Newton. Courtesy the artist and the Box, Los Angeles; Matt's Gallery, London; Monitor, Rome; and Stigter van Doesburg, Amsterdam

“Nathaniel Mellors: Progressive Rocks”

February 6–April 15, 2018

South Galleries, Ground Floor

The fantastical and wryly comical videos, animatronic sculptures, and installations by Los Angeles– and Amsterdam-based artist Nathaniel Mellors (b. 1974, Doncaster, UK) employ absurdist satire to incisively critique morality, national identity, religion, and power structures in contemporary society. Conflating cinematic tropes and methods from television sitcoms, theater, science fiction, mythology, and anthropology, Mellors writes the scripts for each of his projects, which he also directs, edits, and produces. “Progressive Rocks,” Mellors’s first solo presentation in New York, includes four films alongside related paintings and sculptures, all of which feature recurring characters and story lines that intertwine and unfold throughout the exhibition.

Using the Upper Paleolithic period as a lens through which to view the present, Mellors’s recent works typically feature the Neanderthal, a species of early human that was until recently considered inferior to “modern” *Homo sapiens*—and incapable of making art, a marker of human intelligence. *The Sophisticated Neanderthal Interview* (2014) focuses on an interview between a naive contemporary man and a Neanderthal artist. As the interview progresses, the power dynamic between the two shifts as it becomes clear that, despite his presumed primitivism, the Neanderthal is in control. *Neanderthal Container* (2014) similarly flattens linear time, featuring a Neanderthal figure in perpetual free-fall over California’s San Joaquin Valley, trapped in an eternal feedback loop.

Ourhouse Episode -1: Time (2015–16), the latest in Mellors’s dramatic sci-fi series *Ourhouse* (2010–ongoing), is projected alongside an animatronic sculpture of The Object, a book-eating creature who literally digests a family’s library and controls what they see and experience. In the film, The Object consumes *The Eternal Present*, a book covering 35,000 years of European cave art, as the family travels across time to ultimately find themselves in a permanent present, dislocated from history. A new animatronic sculpture and multichannel video installation of *The Aalto Natives* (2017, in collaboration with Erkkä Nissinen), originally conceived for the Finnish Pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale, is in the center of the exhibition. In this work, two messianic beings—in the form of a cardboard box and a giant egg—attempt to make sense of a culture they created a million years prior, which suffers from xenophobia and polarizing populism. The title of the exhibition, like many of Mellors’s projects, plays with linguistic elasticity, conjuring multiple meanings that range from a music subgenre to a forward-thinking mineral mass to a crisis in liberal culture. His raucous works stage a breakdown of form, in which free associations, puns, and fragmented dialogue abstract meaning, causing narrative structures to collapse and a sense of the surreal to take hold.

“Nathaniel Mellors: Progressive Rocks” is curated by Margot Norton, Curator.

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“Alexandra Pirici: Co-natural”

February 6–April 15, 2018

South Galleries, Ground Floor

Alexandra Pirici (b. 1982, Bucharest, Romania) uses sculpture, performance, and choreography to address symbolic manifestations of history through frameworks that define bodily presence in both real and virtual space.

Pirici’s new work, *Co-natural* (2018), is an ongoing action with live performers and a holographic image. The work considers the increasing fragmentation of presence and self, enabled by digital technologies, financialization, and, more broadly, by modernity’s division of nature from culture, body from mind or spirit, and individual from collective. *Co-natural* attempts to enact a dispersion of bodily presence, commenting on contemporary processes of abstraction that separate sign from substance and image from material support. Yet the work also mines this fragmentation for its potential to create a different idea of the self, one distributed across time, space, bodies, history, and memory.



“Alexandra Pirici: Aggregate,” 2017. Exhibition view: Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin. Photo: Joseph Devitt Tremblay. Courtesy the artist

This new work, conceived especially for the New Museum’s South Galleries, continues Pirici’s recent interrogations of the collective body through choreography that links different temporal and spatial events in real time. Exploring memorials and monuments; artworks and objects in museum collections, lost, or stored in freeports; as well as abstractions of the living subject into quantifiable, monetizable data—through physical bodies, voice, and ghostly images—the work resituates them in new relations and entanglements. Pirici contextualizes the hologram, a fragment of a “whole,” through live action; the hologram becomes a mediator of presence, revealing the ways in which images and living bodies influence each other. *Co-natural* proposes a single, modular organism made of both living and digital matter that gradually assembles and disperses again over the course of each day of the exhibition.

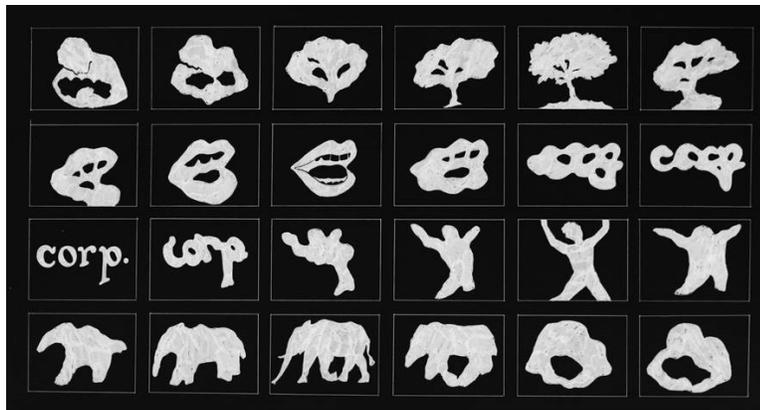
The exhibition is curated by Helga Christoffersen, Associate Curator, and will be on view in the New Museum’s recently inaugurated South Galleries, a space designated for premiering new productions at the Museum. The South Galleries preserve the character of the New York’s loft spaces, where many artists historically worked and exhibited.

“Alexandra Pirici: Co-natural” is performed by Juli Brandano, Farid Fairuz, Paula Gherghe, Miguel Angel Guzmán, Jordan Isadore, and Jennifer Tchiakpe.

Light, set, and holographic display design: Andrei Dinu

Holographic Pepper’s Ghost display: Archi3D LIMITED

Director of photography: Barbu Balasoiu



Anna Craycroft, *Storyboard: Animating Personhood*, 2017. Ink on paper, 20 x 36 in (50.8 x 91.4 cm). Courtesy the artist

“Anna Craycroft: Motion into Being”

As part of the Spring 2018 R&D Season: ANIMATION

January 17–May 13, 2018

Fifth Floor Gallery

Anna Craycroft (b. 1975, Eugene, OR) is artist-in-residence for the Department of Education and Public Engagement’s Spring 2018 R&D Season: ANIMATION. Craycroft’s residency includes an exhibition and public programming considering the rights and ethics of personhood. Questions of who and what qualifies as a person have become increasingly contentious as the agency of all beings—from nonhuman animals

to corporations to artificial intelligence—has fractured legal and theoretical discourse. To chronicle these controversies, Craycroft has transformed the Fifth Floor Gallery into a site for producing an animated film, which she will develop over the course of the exhibition; visitors physically enter the stage where Craycroft shoots new footage every week for the duration of the residency. Drawing on traditions of folklore and fables, which often use anthropomorphism to narrate moral tales, the animated film—while in process and in its final form—confronts the physical and philosophical lenses used to construct and qualify personhood.

Craycroft’s residency includes a series of public programs exploring these issues, including a panel discussion, a choreographic response by artist Will Rawls, and the premiere of Craycroft’s film followed by a conversation with art historian Gloria Sutton.

The exhibition is organized by Johanna Burton, Keith Haring Director and Curator of Education and Public Engagement, and Sara O’Keeffe, Assistant Curator, with Kate Wiener, Education Associate.

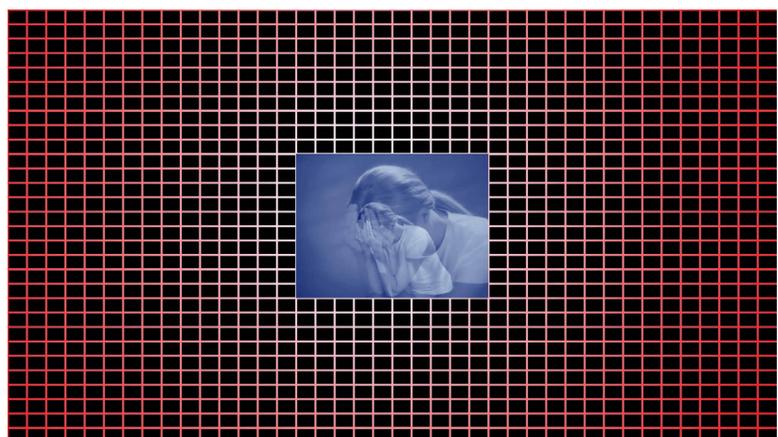
“Sara Magenheimer: NOON”

January 24–April 15, 2018

Storefront Window, Ground Floor

Working across a range of media, including video, sound, performance, sculpture, and installation, New York-based artist Sara Magenheimer (b. 1981, Philadelphia, PA) manipulates and defamiliarizes language with bold combinations of image and text. Her videos incorporate traditional filmic editing techniques alongside those inspired by music and collage. In syncopated progressions of pictures and words, Magenheimer pushes against the bounds of narrative, charting circuitous story lines that invite individual interpretations.

Through unexpected juxtapositions of language, graphic compositions, and idiosyncratic imagery, she reveals how visual and verbal signs mutate and inspire manifold pathways to understanding.



Sara Magenheimer, *Best is Man’s Breath Quality*, 2017 (still). HD video, sound, color; 15:13 min. Courtesy the artist and Video Data Bank

For the window of the New Museum's 231 Bowery building, Magenheimer presents "NOON," a new multi-channel video installation that explores a rhythmic vocabulary of time. In this work, images and words cycle to a steady beat, fragmenting and recombining to create a multilayered visual poem. The image of a clock with the word "NO" replacing each of the numbers dissolves into variations of its component parts, falling in and out of sync. One video in the installation combines a pair of separate texts, which at times run parallel to one another and interweave much like instruments, appearing alternately harmonious or dissonant. On the right, a looping video of iPhone footage runs counterpoint to the composition on the left, which shows unexpected breakdowns of order in public spaces. As with many of Magenheimer's works, "NOON" reveals the arbitrary yet meaningful structures that underlie our daily rhythms, as suggested by the saying "Even a broken clock is right twice a day."

On the occasion of her project, Magenheimer has also completed "Notes on Art and Resistance A-Z," a downloadable PDF that can be accessed on <https://www.newmuseum.org/magenheimer>. Written by the artist over the course of the past year, following the 2016 US presidential election, the text comprises a sequence of personal meditations on making art in a time of profound political and social change.

"Sara Magenheimer: NOON" is part of a new series of window installations that relaunches the program originally mounted at the New Museum in the 1980s. This program included now-legendary projects by Jeff Koons, David Hammons, Linda Montano, Bruce Nauman, Gran Fury, and others.

In conjunction with this installation, a selection of Magenheimer's films will be screened in the New Museum Theater on April 15 at 3 PM, followed by a discussion with the artist.

"Sara Magenheimer: NOON" is curated by Margot Norton, Curator.

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PUBLIC PROGRAMS

"Nathaniel Mellors in Conversation with Curator Margot Norton"

Wednesday February 14, 7 PM

Join us for a conversation between artist Nathaniel Mellors and curator Margot Norton on the occasion of the exhibition "Nathaniel Mellors: Progressive Rocks." In his fantastical and wryly comical videos, sculptures, and installations, Mellors employs absurdist satire to incisively critique morality, national identity, religion, and power structures in contemporary society.

"Beyond Human: Frameworks for Fundamental Rights"

Thursday March 29, 7 PM

Bringing together leading scholars and cultural critics, this panel discussion will consider the legal and ethical implications of expanded definitions of personhood. Participants will explore issues tied to animal rights, environmental protections, corporate personhood, reproductive rights, disability, and racial discrimination through specific case studies and cross-disciplinary conversation. Panelists include Adrian Chen, Karla F.C. Holloway, Kelly Oliver, and Sunaura Taylor, with Megan Hicks serving as moderator. This panel is part of Anna Craycroft's exhibition and residency "Motion into Being," presented during the Department of Education and Public Engagement's Spring 2018 R&D Season: ANIMATION.

"Persona Non Granted by Will Rawls"

Saturday April 14, 5 PM

As part of Anna Craycroft's exhibition and residency "Motion into Being," presented during the Department of Education and Public Engagement's Spring 2018 R&D Season: ANIMATION, artist Will Rawls will respond to Craycroft's anthropomorphic animation project with three episodes exploring her objects as props and bodies, while investigating his own limited potential to fake animation. Interacting with the objects and media in Craycroft's exhibition, Rawls will scrutinize surface, storytelling, space, and texture to choreograph this series of unfortunate "persons."

“Sara Magenheimer Screening and Conversation with Curator Margot Norton”

Sunday April 15, 3 PM

Join us for a screening and discussion with artist Sara Magenheimer and curator Margot Norton. This program is held in conjunction with Magenheimer’s video installation “NOON,” on view in the Storefront Window of the New Museum’s 231 Bowery building from January 24 through April 15, 2018. Working across a range of media, including video, sound, performance, sculpture, collage, and installation, New York–based artist Sara Magenheimer disrupts, manipulates, and defamiliarizes language with bold combinations of image and text.

“Toward an Ethics of Animation: Screening & Conversation with Anna Craycroft & Gloria Sutton”

Thursday May 10, 7 PM

Join us for the world premiere of Anna Craycroft’s stop-motion animation film, which the artist constructed by shooting new footage weekly in her exhibition “Motion into Being.” Craycroft is the artist-in-residence for the Department of Education and Public Engagement’s Spring 2018 R&D Season: ANIMATION.

Following the screening, a lively conversation with art historian Gloria Sutton unpacks Craycroft’s project and examines the ways that animation—the movement of images and bodies—articulates new questions about sense and meaning within contemporary digital culture. Using a historically specific twentieth-century apparatus (Max Fleischer’s Setback Camera and Walt Disney’s Multiplane camera) to not only capture images over the course of her residency at the New Museum, but also to interpolate the material culture of more contemporary imaging technologies, Craycroft builds an accretive, time-based examination of personhood and anthropomorphism. The resulting animation demonstrates how our understanding of personhood is comprised of complex and often contradictory attitudes, expectations, and definitions. Distinct from the ways that early twentieth-century European avant-garde film advanced narratives of “failed vision” and “enlightenment” within the transformation of modern life, this conversation reconsiders the aesthetics of abstraction and experimentation that are beholden to an ethics of contingency and fragmentation within contemporary culture.

ABOUT NEW MUSEUM

The New Museum is the only museum in New York City exclusively devoted to contemporary art. Founded in 1977, the New Museum is a center for exhibitions, information, and documentation about living artists from around the world. From its beginnings as a one-room office on Hudson Street to the inauguration of its first freestanding building on the Bowery designed by SANAA in 2007, the New Museum continues to be a place of experimentation and a hub of new art and new ideas.

SUPPORT

“Nathaniel Mellors: Progressive Rocks”

Support for this exhibition has been provided by Frame Contemporary Art Finland.

This exhibition is made possible with support provided by the Toby Devan Lewis Emerging Artists Exhibitions Fund.

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“Alexandra Pirici: Co-natural”

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This exhibition is made possible with support provided by the Toby Devan Lewis Emerging Artists Exhibitions Fund.

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“Anna Craycroft: Motion into Being”

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Laurie Wolfert

The Council for Artists Research and Residencies of the New Museum

Additional support is provided by:

The Toby Devan Lewis Emerging Artists Exhibitions Fund.

The Artemis Council of the New Museum

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“Sara Magenheimer: NOON”

This project is made possible with support provided by the Toby Devan Lewis Emerging Artists Exhibitions Fund.

Additional support provided by Video Data Bank at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.