

Tenant of Culture 8 Jul/18 Sep 2022

Tenant of Culture, *Flash s/s* (series), 2020. Courtesy the artist and Soft Opening Gallery, London. Photo: Theo Christelis



Camden Art Centre is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Tenant of Culture, the anonym of Dutch artist Hendrickje Schimmel (b. 1990, Arnhem, Netherlands). The artist, whose practice is characterised by a repurposing of discarded materials to birth new forms in an material exploration of consumer culture and wastefulness, will realise an ambitious new site-specific installation, her largest work to-date, in July 2022.

Tenant of Culture is the third recipient of the Camden Art Centre Emerging Artist Prize at Frieze. The artist's research for her new exhibition began in Camden Art Centre's archives, where she uncovered reference to the mass labour of women in the laundry industry in 19th century Britain – the extent of which, the artist discovered, is largely undocumented.

The exhibition draws on and extends the artist's long-standing exploration of consumer culture and the vast and problematic waste accumulated via the fashion industry. Repurposing discarded garments and accessories into new sculptural forms, the resulting works nod to former relics, simultaneously desirable and monstrous, which are a reminder of the unstable cycle of trends and fashion, and the exploitative and often invisible economies of supply and demand.

In Gallery 3, huge sculptural forms, comprised of a bespoke hanging system and reminiscent of high-end fashion display mechanisms, will suspend a mass of synthetically coloured textile works consisting of used and reassembled garments. Deconstructed, bleached, re-dyed, re-assembled, wrung-out, pressed, hung and stretched, the sculptures mirror methodologies employed in the laundry and textile dye industries. The garments which make up the sculptures are made from repurposed denim, waterproofs and performance-wear - materials that take a huge amount of water and chemicals to produce and finish - and have been treated with acid or enzymes to produce synthetic and toxically bright colours. The artist intentionally steers away from materials that are commonly associated with sustainability, and avoids romanticised depictions of 'organic' and 'natural' tones and fabrics. Instead, the recycled garments and accessories are made from plastics and synthetic fibres, dyed in noxious, bright and artificial colours. Large and shapeless in scale and form, at odds

with the polished allure of high-end and fast fashion, the works seek to make visible the historical and contemporary waste water problem created by industrial scale laundries and textile production methodologies that are intrinsic to the fashion industry.

In researching this process Tenant of Culture discusses a distinct lack of information on the industrial history of fashion and thus highlights the lack of value we place on women's labour: the industry today is still made up of mostly female workers and this centuries old process still informs modern day mass production. If capitalism produces a plethora of garments that have some amount of exchange value for a fixed moment in time, and if these items, largely produced by women, soon become waste, where does value sit, who gets to decide, and at what cost?

Tenant of Culture is the third recipient of the Camden Art Centre Emerging Artist Prize at Frieze, which offers invaluable critical exposure to an emerging artist, concurrent with their first show at a London institution. The prize winner is supported by the experienced Camden Art Centre curatorial team, and their show is underpinned by an extensive programme of public talks and events. The Camden Art Centre Emerging Art Prize at Frieze is generously supported by Georgina Townsley, Alexandra Economu and Noach Vander Beken, Nicola Blake, Simon and Carolyn Franks, Ronald and Sophie Sofer and Russell Tovey. With special thanks to Frieze, London, and Soft Opening, London.

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Biography

Tenant of Culture is the artistic practice of Hendrickje Schimmel (b. 1990, Arnhem, Netherlands), who lives and works in London, UK. She received her MA in Mixed Media from the Royal College of Art, London, UK in 2016, and completed a BA in Womenswear at Hogeschool voor de Kunsten, Zwolle, Netherlands in 2012. Forthcoming solo exhibitions include: Camden Arts Centre, London, UK (2022) and Soft Opening, London, UK (2022). Recent solo exhibitions include Et Al., Kunstverein Dresden, Dresden, Germany (2021); Autumn Cloth, Sophie Tappeiner, Vienna, Austria (2021); Georgics (how to style a chore coat), Fons Welters, Amsterdam, Netherlands (2020); I forgot to tell you I've changed, Het Fries Museum, Leeuwarden (2020); Eclogues (an apology for actors), Nicoletti Contemporary, London (2019); Works and Days, Outpost Gallery, Norwich (2018); Deadstock, Sarabande Foundation, London (2018); Climate | Change, Clearview, London (2017) and The Latest Thing, CODE ROOD Koningsweg, Arnhem (2016). Selected group exhibitions include: Fittings with Kinke Kooi, Exile Gallery, Vienna (2020); Image Power at Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem (2020); Transformers at Future Gallery, Berlin, Germany (2020); Gubbinal at Project Native Informant, London (2019); NEW RUINS at Soft Opening, London (2019); Artquest Peer Forum at Camden Arts Centre, London (2018); Out of Fashion at Centraal Museum, Utrecht (2017); Bloomberg New Contemporaries at Institute of Contemporary Art, London (2016). The work of Tenant of Culture is in the collections of the Fries Museum, Leeuwarden and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands. In 2020 Soft Opening published the artist's first monograph in collaboration with Charles Asprey which was one of the winners of the Swiss Most Beautiful Books Award.

Camden Art Centre

Camden Art Centre is a place for world-class contemporary art exhibitions and education. Situated in Hampstead, North London (charity number 1065829) Camden Art Centre is a place for art and artists; a place for the curious, the novice and the expert alike. It's a place to see, to make, to learn and to talk about contemporary art, whether in our building, attending off-site projects or via our digital forums. Founded by artists in 1965, the Centre continues to be a space for the most vital and diverse mix of practices and ideas and is dedicated to supporting artists at every stage of their careers.