

A person can never perceive truth and fiction at the same time. But there is such a thing as 'poetic faith' or the 'suspension of disbelief'. This is a mechanism in our brains that automatically triggers a temporary suspension of our belief in rational, perceptible reality, thereby allowing us to believe in the fiction we encounter at that moment. Indeed, whilst reading a novel or watching a film, we 'believe' in the story, however implausible it might seem. 'Poetic faith' is considered an essential ingredient for storytelling of any kind.

The term 'suspension of disbelief' was first coined in 1817 by the British Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). This was no coincidence, because Romanticism held up intuition, emotion and imagination as acts of defiance against the then fast-growing belief in scientific and rationally explicable reality. Almost two centuries later, in the early 21st century, a neuroscientific explanation for the term was provided by the American literary critic and psychoanalyst Norman N. Holland (1927-2017): when a person is confronted with a fictional narrative, the brain automatically switches back to perception mode and shuts down all logical systems linked to concrete reality.

This is why we find it so difficult to identify lies. Indeed, in the first instance we always believe what we see. Only afterwards are we in a position to make a conscious effort not to believe something. Many art forms are, by definition, fictitious. That is why they require an act of 'poetic faith' or the 'suspension of disbelief'. Unlike literature, poetry, theatre and film, contemporary visual art is frequently based on a non-linear chronology. Moreover, it also involves elaborate forms of abstraction and conceptualisation, which hinders the 'suspension of disbelief'.

In our over-informed society, in which the boundary between real and fictitious reality and information has become exceedingly blurred, the exhibition 'Poetic Faith' can be seen as a tribute to the power of, and belief in, the imagination. It challenges us to set aside the faith we place in our own (rational) reality, thereby allowing us to perceive 'impossible' artworks as 'perfectly possible' at first sight.

With work by Shikh Sabbir Alam, Marie Cloquet, Leo Copers, Hanne Darboven, Markus Degerman, Joseph Grigely, Jorge Macchi, Bruce Nauman, Navid Nuur, Panamarenko, Giulio Paolini, Mandla Reuter, Jason Rhoades, Gil Shachar, Nedko Solakov, Birde Vanheerswynghels, Jan Van Imschoot, Tamara Van San and Philippe Van Snick.



Shikh Sabbir Alam b. 1982, Kushtia, Bangladesh;  
lives and works in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Shikh Sabbir Alam studied at the Oslo Academy of Fine Arts and at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Baroda, India. Freehand drawings are the starting point from which his reflections take on a more permanent form, mostly as paintings. Recurrent themes in his work are our perception and the way in which our brains influence our observations. The artist also questions the boundary between reality and fiction. Flora and fauna are his key sources of inspiration.

- *The Elephant*, 2017
- acrylic on canvas
- S.M.A.K. Collection, purchased in 2018

Our eyes (and other senses) absorb our surroundings, but our brains process these impressions and give meaning to them in accordance with our social, geographical and personal background. Alam plays with the difference between 'looking' and 'seeing' in his oeuvre. At first glance, we see an abstract composition with geometric shapes. After we read the title, however, the image is suddenly imbued with meaning and we can no longer see what we first saw. The painting becomes a theatrical vista of an elephant, which each of us completes in our own head in our own way.

Marie Cloquet b. 1976, Ghent, Belgium;  
lives and works in Ghent, Belgium

Marie Cloquet creates new, monumental landscapes. Her starting point is the extensive archive of black-and-white photos that she takes during her travels around the world. She uses the negatives as 'sketches'. The artist projects them in her studio and prints them onto drawing paper treated with light-sensitive emulsion, which creates an unusual effect. Cloquet tears up the prints and then brings the fragments together to create new landscapes, with traces of watercolour here and there. Her work lies somewhere between land art, photography and painting.

- *Nouadhibou III*, 2010
- photographic emulsion and watercolour on paper
- The Friends of S.M.A.K., loan 2014

In 2005, Marie Cloquet travelled to the west coast of Africa and ended up in the bay of Nouadhibou in Mauritania. She was overwhelmed by the giant ship graveyard stretching out before her. In Nouadhibou, she saw a scale model of contemporary global problems: a border region full of shipwrecks, other dumped rubbish and barracks full of refugees who had become stranded there after a failed attempt to cross to Europe. According to legend, Nouadhibou is also the place where the survivors of the sunken frigate the 'Medusa' were staggering around in 1816, a scene that Théodore Géricault depicted in his famous painting 'The Raft of the Medusa' (1818-19). During her sojourn in Nouadhibou, Marie Cloquet took numerous black-and-white photos. She uses them to create hybrid landscapes such as this, which bear traces of the actual topography, whilst at the same time being completely independent.

Leo Copers b. 1947, Ghent, Belgium;  
lives and works in Wetteren, Belgium

Leo Copers' work is extremely diverse. His oeuvre predominantly consists of sculptures, installations and performances. Using a minimal and conceptual formal language that is peppered with symbols and metaphors, the artist creates surreal works with a knowing wink. Copers often explores the natural elements and the tension that is created between polar forces such as gas and fire, or water and electricity. Danger, destruction and transience are recurrent themes in his work.

- *Vliegende en pinkende gloeilamp boven Milaan* [*Flying and flashing lightbulb above Milan*], 1970
- latex paint and pencil on paper
- S.M.A.K. Collection, purchased in 1978

According to Leo Copers, his artistic career began on 3 May

1969. On this precise day, he was dumbfounded by the simple sight of a light bulb drifting on the River Lys in Ghent. Here, the flashing bulb is flying above Milan. Rationally speaking, this surreal scene is impossible, and yet Copers based his drawing on a 'real' sighting. In 1962, the Italian media reported that a UFO had been spotted above the Italian city. When Copers heard this, he felt that it would have made his ideal subject. This thought led him to make this 'preparatory drawing' eight years later. Moreover, in order to fully intermingle fact and fiction, the artist gave the drawing a fictitious date – his birthday. An installation by Copers in the form of a catapult, also a piece from the S.M.A.K. collection, is equipped with all the necessary elements for executing the scene from the drawing, thereby contributing to its so-called realism.

Hanne Darboven b. 1941, Munich, Germany;  
d. 2009, Hamburg, Germany

Hanne Darboven was a member of the first generation of conceptual artists. She saw numbers, classification systems and repetitions as non-descriptive forms of writing. Her sequential oeuvre has a romantic, subjective, almost obsessive character and takes an abstract approach to reality. Like a bookkeeper, Darboven attempted to conquer time day by day, page by page, book by book; or at least to measure time in divisions which are functional for herself, but unfathomable for us. Her almost forcibly neurotic work, which is awash with figures, numbers expressed in words and diagrams, runs into thousands of pages.

- *Welttheater >79<*, 1979
- offset prints on paper, first edition
- S.M.A.K. collection, purchased in 1979

'Welttheater >79<' consists of 366 black-and-white prints. In the left-hand half of the image, we repeatedly see two austere and unfathomable black planes: the closed curtains of the world theatre. To the right we see the stage, always with the curtain open. Time and time again, a different figure appears beneath the spotlight, and in a few cases also an algorithm. The figures are reminiscent of characters from fairy tales, or bisque figurines of the kind used to decorate old-fashioned interiors. The constant repetition of the same composition feels obsessive. The system as a whole is subjective but logical, like an index. It is as though the full duration of a theatre performance can be captured at a glance.

Markus Degerman b. 1972, Stockholm, Sweden;  
lives and works in Stockholm, Sweden

In his artistic practice, Markus Degerman combines and reconstructs elements from visual art, architecture and design. He removes them from their context and charges them with fresh meanings. His interventions often experiment with the spatial design of public, urban or institutional environments. As well as being active as an artist, he is also Dean of The National Academy of the Arts in Oslo.

- *What A Chair Would Look Like If Your Knees Bent The Other Way*, 1998
- mixed media
- S.M.A.K. collection, acquired in 1999

Upon seeing this chair, we immediately sense that something is wrong. This is not a normal seat. But when we read the title, it inevitably alters our perception of the work. Although we are perfectly aware that the people for whom the artist designed this chair do not exist, we cannot help but look at it differently. Degerman temporarily causes us to cast rationality aside and imagine how we might actually sit on this chair. With our knees bent the other way, of course.

Joseph Grigely b. 1956, Longmeadow, Massachusetts, US;  
lives and works in Chicago, Illinois, US

Joseph Grigely, who has been deaf since the age of ten, explores language and communication. He has studied the art of conversation between deaf and hearing people. The starting point for his installations is his personal archive, which contains

remnants of discussions with people who can hear. This can include scribbles on serviettes, small drawings, photos of hands in the act of writing, and half-smoked cigarettes. He uses these residual elements to shape everyday discussions and encounters in a conceptual way.

- *Untitled Conversation (The Locksmith)*, 1995
- print and ballpoint pen on paper
- S.M.A.K. Collection, purchase 1996

'Untitled Conversations' is a series of artworks that Grigely made in response to his discussions with diverse people, and in a wide variety of contexts. Each time, the subtitle provides the key to reading the work or finding its meaning. Here, he shows a sketch made by a locksmith to explain to Grigely why the copied key was thicker than the original. The final sentence of the artist's text dryly explains that, nevertheless, the key did not appear to function. In his works, Grigely presents his highly original take on the act of conversing, as viewed through the lens of his physical impairment. By making use of written and 'drawn' language, the artist describes real-life situations which, due to the conceptual nature of his work, we can nevertheless read as fiction, and can even supplement or embellish in our imagination.

Jorge Macchi b. 1963, Buenos Aires, Argentina; lives and works in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Jorge Macchi makes drawings, sculptures, collages and installations and is unsurpassed at understanding the art of achieving maximum emotionality with minimal form. By making abundant use of a reduced, ephemeral visual language and everyday materials, his work appears to resemble conceptual art. And yet it also generally contains a condensed, romantic emotionality, which seems almost baroque. Through this combination, Macchi lays bare the emotional spheres that do not generally emerge in our everyday observation of reality, or even remain hidden.

- *Galaxy*, 2011
- offset print, ed. 1/25
- The Friends of S.M.A.K. Collection, The Friends of S.M.A.K. publication 2011

Macchi's muted work often consists of anecdotes and coincidences that he alights upon in his daily life, which he collates and transforms into visual poetry. Thus the artist bridges the divide between the way in which we logically understand the world and how we experience it emotionally. Macchi's work hints at the existence of a mysterious, parallel world beneath the surface of everyday reality. This is amply demonstrated in 'Galaxy', which depicts a standard illuminated computer keyboard that appears to be drowning in a sprawling, black background. With a little imagination, and the title of the work at the back of our mind, we can discern a galaxy in an endless universe.

Bruce Nauman b. 1941, Fort Wayne, US; lives and works in Galisteo, US

Bruce Nauman is one of the most influential artists of the post-war period. In 2009, he won the prestigious Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale. Nauman made his debut as a performance artist in the mid-sixties, but employs a wide range of media: from video, installation, sound composition, sculpture, graphics and photography, to neon sculpture. And yet Nauman continues to consciously describe himself as a sculptor, partly because he views the medium as being of secondary importance. In other words, Nauman never sees an artwork as a finished product, but as an active process in which we too are involved.

- *Violent Incident (Man/Woman Segment)*, 1986
- video, 30 min 28 sec
- S.M.A.K. collection, purchase 1986

'Violent Incident' is both seductive and alienating. Nauman's video installation opens with the image of a beautifully laid table, but what happens next completely undermines the romantic expectation evoked by the image. On the screen, we are confronted with a hypnotic repetition of violence. Behind this confusing

experience lies a script that Nauman wrote for two characters, and had performed in four versions with varying relationships between the male and female roles. In the background we hear a man who is constantly shouting stage directions at the actors. The domestic argument is performed in such a dry, almost conceptual way as to seem entirely unconvincing.

Navid Nuur b. 1976, Teheran, Iran; lives and works in The Hague, The Netherlands

Navid Nuur devised the term 'interimodules' to describe his highly divergent works, which range from installations, performances, drawings and texts to sculptures and paintings. These 'interim objects' can be situated somewhere between the idea of the artist and its implementation in the form of an artwork. Many of Nuur's works have a fleeting existence, and are only preserved in a publication after the event, or as documentation. Moreover, many of the materials with which the artist works (such as light, water, air or even ice-cream) are by nature transient. Although his oeuvre initially appears to be conceptual, it often draws upon a lyrical, sometimes almost romantic poetry. Thus apparently impossible phenomena are made possible, or vice-versa.

- *As We Become One*, 2015
- handwritten text on paper from the edition folder 'The Dutch Connection', A4 number 5, ed. 5/50
- S.M.A.K. Collection, purchase 2015

'As We Become One' comprises a piece of paper upon which Nuur has written the text 'As We Become One'. It appears in the normal reading direction on one side, and in mirror writing on the other. This sentence, which often appears in romantic lyrics and poems, expresses people's deeply romantic, but no less genuinely experienced, longing to merge into one another. By not allowing the words on the two sides of the sheet to converge, Nuur makes it clear to us that becoming one with another is impossible. Here the paper itself literally impedes this ideal.

Panamarenko b. 1940, Antwerp, Belgium; d. 2019, Antwerp, Belgium

In the early years of his career, Panamarenko (the pseudonym of Henri Van Herwegen) organised playful actions and happenings and made poetic objects. He was fascinated by the natural sciences and the movement of insects and animals. It was his friend, the artist Joseph Beuys, who made Panamarenko realise that the technical constructions he was making alongside his poetic objects could equally be considered art. This is how Panamarenko's largest ever flying machine, the airship known as 'The Aeromodeller' (1969-71), came into being. In the following decades, the artist would become famous with his fantastic flying machines and vehicles.

- *Papaver*, 1985
- plastic, textile
- Private collection Belgium, long-term loan

Panamarenko's handmade flying machines are often derived from flying techniques and shapes that appear in nature, like this poppy flower. They have a typically fragile, cobbled-together exterior and hover between art and science, dream and reality. Such is the aesthetic and poetic power of the idiosyncratic structures that we almost forget to spontaneously wonder whether they can actually fly. It was this very poetry and the possibility of failure that Panamarenko saw as the most important aspects of his work. We are challenged to consider to what extent 'Papaver' might actually fly, and where the technical genius or deficiencies lie.

Giulio Paolini b. 1940, Genoa, Italy; lives and works in Turin, Italy Paolini was a member of the arte povera movement which began in Italy and was chiefly active in the 1970s. In the early 1960s, the artist conducted research into the mimicking of reality within painting. One area of interest to him was perspective drawings: an opportunity to conjure up three-dimensional space within the flat surface of the canvas. Pencil lines appeared on his white

canvases which allude, amongst other things, to the rules of scientific perspective that have been used for centuries. Paolini's works gradually became more complex, with the canvases forming spatial installations on the wall and receiving mythological or art-theoretical titles.

- *Parnaso*, 1978
- pencil on painted canvas, pieces of brick
- S.M.A.K. collection, purchase 1979

'Parnaso' alludes to Parnassus, a mountain in Greece which, according to legend, is home to Apollo and his muse Corycia. It is also the title of a well-known fresco in the Vatican created by the Renaissance painter Raphael in 1511. Along with his 'De Pictura' (1979) and 'Liber veritatis' (1979), Paolini's 'Parnaso' forms a triptych on the subject of the myth of perspective within the two-dimensional plane of painting. 'De Pictura' ('On Painting') is named after the treatise by the Renaissance theoretician Alberti (1404-1472) that, in its day, disseminated new knowledge about scientific perspective. In 'Parnaso', Paolini's interest in the flat geometry of the canvas was expanded through the incorporation of the physical space. The pieces of brick cause us to reflect upon the flatness of the canvases, in contrast to the spatiality they evoke.

Mandla Reuter b. 1975, Nqutu, South Africa;  
lives and works in Berlin, Germany

As a sculptor and installation artist, Mandla Reuter explores the ambiguous relationship between art and the notion of 'place'. His interventions, which are subtle but at times also radical, call into question typical artistic notions such as 'art production' and 'presentation context'. Reuter often bases his work on the specific characteristics of the space in which he is exhibiting. He sometimes appears to entirely detach this from the real world, evoking an alienating atmosphere in which fiction proliferates.

- *Atlantis*, 2016
- PVC-coated polyester canvas, mixed media
- The Friends of S.M.A.K., loan 2016

The title 'Atlantis' alludes to the eponymous mythical island that fell out of favour with the Greek gods, was inundated by the sea and disappeared. Theories about the location of the island abound, but as none have been conclusively proven, the mystery remains. Reuter's work contains a gigantic lifebuoy of the kind used by marine archaeologists to raise finds from the bottom of the ocean and bring them to the surface. The buoy was poetically interpreted by the artist, as a means of shining a spotlight on the island of Atlantis again, and more broadly, on that which has been forgotten and hidden. The buoy forges a connection with myths and stories from the present and the past which may or may not be true. With a little imagination, a beached whale is just one of the things we should be able to discern.

Jason Rhoades b. 1965, Newcastle, California, US;  
d. 2006, Los Angeles, California, US

The American artist Jason Rhoades is known for his associative, life-sized sculptural installations in which he combines conceptual strength with a touch of humour. He utilised an astonishing array of materials and objects from everyday American culture. Rhoades did not allow himself to be pigeonholed as an artist and would flout all of the art world's aesthetic conventions and rules. His installations were never finished. He treated every piece as a life-long project, continuously adding or removing parts.

- *P.I.G. (Piece in Ghent)*, 1994
- video installation, mixed media
- Private collection, loan 1994

'P.I.G. (Piece in Ghent)' is Jason Rhoades' associative and humorous interpretation of 'The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb', the famous altarpiece by the Van Eyck brothers housed in Ghent and set to be placed firmly in the spotlight in 2020, the Van Eyck year. For 'P.I.G.', Rhoades began to design a strict scenography, which included a page-long summary of existing objects and those to be made by hand. He linked these to motifs from the medieval

painting, thereby imbuing the items with meaning. The links are formal, narrative or allegorical. Rhoades challenges us, in turn, to make connections. For example, the dovecot in the installation is an allusion to the dove – the Holy Spirit – in 'The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb', the sheepskin is a reference to the Lamb, and the whirlpool an allusion to the holy fountain.

Gil Shachar b. 1965, Tel Aviv, Israel;  
lives and works in Duisburg, Germany

Gil Shachar has a preference for images from the collective memory, such as fairy-tale figures, and for universal themes such as the father-son relationship. This recognisability leads to multiple associations in his oeuvre, which Shachar sees as enriching each piece and lending it greater meaning. The artist often begins with pre-existing two-dimensional images, such as illustrations or photos, which he converts into three-dimensional sculptures.

- *Untitled*, 1991
- varnished wood, paint
- S.M.A.K. Collection, donation 1995

A single glance at this untitled work is all it takes for us to recognise Pinocchio. In Italian, the word 'pinocchio' means a piece of pine tree; but it also alludes to the boy whose nose grows longer when he tells lies. 'Suspension of disbelief' means that people are bad at recognising falsehoods, but in the case of Pinocchio, the lie becomes visible. It is thus also deliberate that the nose is open at the front, so that we can look inside the sculpture. In the fairy tale, the boy experiences all kinds of adventures. In reality, however, he is an object – a creation of the carpenter Geppetto. For Shachar, Pinocchio symbolises the artwork and Geppetto the artist. In the story, Pinocchio is given an apple to take with him on his first day at school. The apple on Pinocchio's nose also alludes to another familiar story: the legend of William Tell, who had to shoot the apple from his son's head. In both stories, the father-son relationship plays a central role.

Nedko Solakov b. 1957, Cherven Bryag, Bulgaria;  
lives and works in Sofia, Bulgaria

Nedko Solakov plays with the codes of art and the art world but is also critical of social, political, economic and societal reality. He connects his personal experiences as a Bulgarian artist from an 'old' communist system to typical Western-capitalist artistic strategies. Solakov is a born storyteller. Ironic and often absurd texts frequently underpin his drawings and installations. In his apparently simple stories and works on paper, which are imbued with a mildly melancholic sharp-wittedness, the artist sometimes deploys almost surrealistic fiction to mock social events, himself, his artistry and the entire art circuit.

- *Recession (sell it separately, not as a series)*, 2008
- watercolour and ink on paper, series of 15
- S.M.A.K. Collection, purchase 2011

Solakov made the drawing series 'Recession (sell it separately, not as series)' in 2008, the year in which the economic crisis erupted. Stylistically, the drawings are indebted to the (comic) illustrated story, the precursor to the comic strip, in which the text was not set in balloons but either beneath or above the drawings. Each drawing is a stand-alone short story, in which Solakov, always in his familiar absurdist style and with a dash of surreal fantasy, describes an (economic) crisis situation. Despite being entirely fictional, the relative simplicity, aesthetics, humour and appealing narrative style of the drawings ensure that the fifteen 'mini economic crises' become almost realistically tangible. The subtitle '(sell it separately, not as a series)' is an ironic allusion to the art market. In times of crisis, collectors might only be able to afford to buy a single drawing instead of a whole series.

Birde Vanheerswynghels b. 1986, Roeselare, Belgium;  
lives and works in Brussels, Belgium

In her studio in Brussels, Birde Vanheerswynghels constructs monumental charcoal drawings of sumptuous landscapes.

In addition, she often embroiders onto previous work in order to gradually unfold new compositions. During this process, she makes use of Polaroids and photos taken with her mobile phone. This is because photography allows her to see more clearly what is missing from her drawings, or rather, what can be changed. The artist recently utilised the resulting archive of Polaroids and detailed images to create new work.

- *Untitled*, 2018
- charcoal and pastel on paper
- Flemish Community Collection, loan 2020

Birde Vanheerswynghels departs from fragmentary images of real landscapes in order to compose new and fictitious images. Time and time again, she alights upon subjects such as trees, plants, animals, water features and flowers and subjects them to analysis. The interplay between drawing and erasure is an important part of Vanheerswynghels' working method. The combination of coloured pastels, charcoal and lighting effects creates depth in her images. Based on her visual memory, the photos and her imagination, she thus creates imaginary landscapes that appear deceptively real.

Jan Van Imschoot b. 1963, Ghent, Belgium;  
lives and works in Noncourt-sur-le-Rongeant, France

Jan Van Imschoot examines every facet of human existence. At times with a knowing wink, at others cynically or seriously, or all three together. The Ghent-based painter, who moved to France in 2013, disliked conventions and trod his own path, adopting a style that he himself described as 'anarcho-baroque': contemporary baroque with a touch of anarchy. He often uses found visual material as a starting point, or an event in his surroundings or in wider society that has affected him.

- *4 dagen 30 [4 days 30]*, 1993
- oil on canvas
- S.M.A.K. Collection, purchase 1997

This work was created four days after Van Imschoot's 30th birthday. At that point, he turned his back on his earlier works, and the interplay between word and image began to play the leading role in his oeuvre. With this work, Van Imschoot pays tribute to his artistic and literary predecessors, whose work he admires: including Joachim Beuckelaer, W.C. Heda, René Magritte, Marcel Broodthaers, Louis Paul Boon and L.F. Céline. This explains the subtitle 'Ode to a Great'. In the text on the painting, the artist describes how he arrived at the work. Irrespective of whether it actually happened, the text ensures that we see the artist at work in our mind's eye, busily scratching sentences into the layer of paint with a nail. Van Imschoot: "The meaning of images, figurative marks, language and symbols changes according to age, culture, time in general and knowledge of the facts. This is why, for me, art is an allegory of the great nothingness, the representation of death."

Tamara Van San b. 1982, Antwerp, Belgium;  
lives and works in Appelterre, Belgium

Van San studied sculpture at Sint-Lucas in Antwerp. She soon abandoned the classical technique of sculpting from a model and experimented with all manner of non-classical materials and shapes in vivid hues. For several years now, she has primarily been working in clay with brightly-coloured glazes. She makes sculptural spatial installations for both indoors and outdoors, but in addition also creates small-scale sculptures for a more intimate setting. In her work, she plays a spontaneous game with the basic sculptural elements of volume, form and colour.

- *Monk Bowing Down for a Holy Stone*, 2016
- ceramic, marble
- S.M.A.K. collection, purchase 2017

'Monk Bowing Down for a Holy Stone' is one of a series of tower-shaped, ceramic sculptures. These 'New Stones' are fashioned from handmade shells. Van San combines this personal technique with a multicoloured glazing method that she also developed herself. The artist sought out a non-figurative and non-geometric formal language in order to arrive at a sculpture in which colour and shape are mutually reinforcing. Although the work may initially appear abstract, the title conjures an image in the viewer's mind that is projected onto the sculpture. Van San drew her inspiration for the piece from the Chinese Gongshi stones. The appearance of the stones is the result of erosion.

Philippe Van Snick b. 1946, Ghent, Belgium;  
d. 2019, Brussels, Belgium

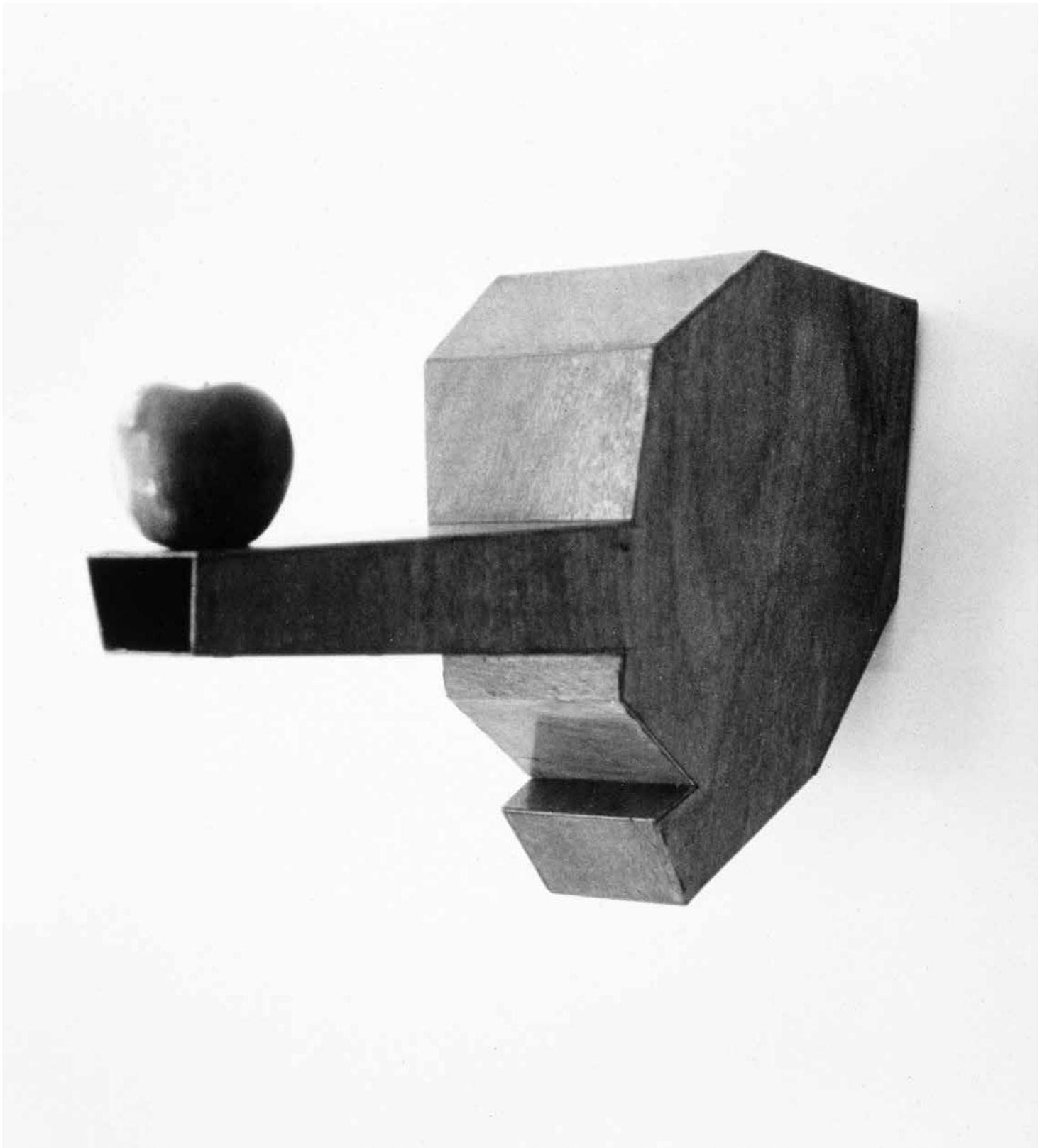
Over the course of his career, Philippe Van Snick developed a simple, systematic formal language akin to Minimalism. He took control of reality through his own decimal system. This systematic approach yielded a colour palette comprising ten hues: red, yellow, blue, orange, purple, green, white, black, gold and silver. Van Snick used these shades to systematically evoke perceptions and – paradoxically – feelings. In February 2019, the artist was awarded an Ultima in the Visual Art category by the Flemish Minister of Culture, Sven Gatz.

- *Dag/Nacht*, 1987
- acrylic on wood, mirror glass
- S.M.A.K. collection, purchase 1989

Day and night is a theme that often crops up in Van Snick's oeuvre. These two plinths might appear simple, but they are actually the fruit of a carefully considered strategy. For the artist, a colour not only has a physical presence, but also a mental one. Here, the artist conjures up day and night with a minimum of materials. The plinths are open on top, revealing interior colour fields in the ten hues from his palette. He discloses nothing more, leaving it for us to complete the work using our imaginations.



Jason Rhoades  
*P.I.G. (Piece in Ghent)*, 1994, video installation, mixed media  
Private collection, loan 1994



Gil Shachar  
*Untitled*, 1991, varnished wood, paint  
S.M.A.K. Collection, donation 1995