

No. 439, September 2020

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*Für Dich & Mich 1*, 2014

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Helen Cammock  
*They Call It Idlewild*, 2020

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# ART Monthly

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**Helen Cammock**  
Artist Commission

**Ayşe Erkmen**  
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**The Pandemic Will Not Be Televised**  
Frances Whorrall-Campbell

**Art and Place**  
Lizzie Lloyd

**English, Singlish, Globlish?**  
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**Onyeka Igwe**  
Profile by Amy Budd



bowl-shaped £40m facility, designed by Rem Koolhaas and featuring a large roof garden, will allow all 151,000 artworks in the museum's collection to be visible to the public – only 8% of the collection fits in the main museum (Artnotes *AM394*). Staying with Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, the venue found a novel way to present art during lockdown: a drive-through exhibition. Inspired by an idea by artist Ted Noten, the museum teamed up with Rotterdam's 100,000sqft Ahoy arena to present a show of works by the likes of Bas Jan Ader, Cyprien Gaillard, Anselm Kiefer, Paul McCarthy, Bruce Nauman and Ugo Rondinone. From 1 to 23 August, visitors toured the darkened exhibition in electric cars – either their own or one of those provided – in order to encounter videos, installations, paintings and sculptures, which they illuminated with their headlights.

## Commissions

**David Adjaye's** memorial for Dorothy 'Cherry' Groce will be unveiled in Brixton's Windrush Square in south London this month. In 1985, Groce was at home in Brixton with three of her children when a botched police raid, carried out to arrest one of her children who it turned out was not there at the time, resulted in Groce being shot in the chest by DI Douglas Lovelock. The shooting triggered that year's Brixton Riots, just four years after the previous riots. Groce, who had arrived in the UK from Jamaica in 1962, was left paralysed from the waist down and in 2011 died from an infection that a subsequent inquiry in 2014 concluded was a direct result of the shooting, which had left fragments of bullet in her spine – it was at this point that the Metropolitan Police apologised for the wrongful shooting. The £150,000 memorial is backed by the Cherry Groce Foundation, with a £20,000 donation from the Metropolitan Police. Although the foundation struggled to raise the full amount during the current pandemic, Lambeth Council has underwritten the project with £82,000 from statutory funds received from property developers. The memorial will be unveiled on 28 September, marking 35 years since the shooting.

**Breath is Invisible** is a new series of public commissions exhibited on the street at 236 Westbourne Grove in west London.

The programme runs from 7 July to 9 October and features new commissions by Martyn Ware, Zachary Eastwood-Bloom and Joy Gregory. The scheme launched with a series of works by Khadija Saye, the young Gambian-British artist who died in the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017.

**Fiona Banner AKA The Vanity Press** (Interview *AM338*) has produced billboards for the Your Space or Mine initiative by outdoor promotion specialist BuildHollywood. The posters, which feature the work 'intermission', are being presented in ten cities across the UK.

**Mel Bochner** has been selected to produce the 7th Laughing Cow Cheese Collector's Edition Box, following in the footsteps of Hans-Peter Feldmann, Thomas Bayrle, Jonathan Monk, Wim Delvoye, Karin Sander and Daniel Buren. 'Each box', according to Sébastien Pluot, the project curator, 'offers purchasers a choice: to consume the contents, or to keep it intact as a collectible artwork.' Conceptual Art pioneer Bochner, who knows which side his bread is buttered, said: 'The Laughing Cow® is the Pop Art equivalent of the Mona Lisa.'

## Prizes

The **Turner Bursaries**, which this year replace the Turner Prize, have been awarded to ten artists, each of whom receives £10,000: Arika (Reports *AM402*), Liz Johnson Artur, Oreet Ashery (Interview *AM381*, Print *AM432*), Shawanda Corbett, Jamie Crewe, Sean Edwards, Sidsel Meineche Hansen, Ima-Abasi Okon (Profile *AM428*), Imran Perretta (Profile *AM431*) and Alberta Whittle.

## People

**Larry Achiampong** and **Dani Admiss** have been appointed to the 2020 Stanley Picker Fellowships in Art & Design at Kingston University, where the artists will create new bodies of work to be presented at the Stanley Picker Gallery next year.

**Valika Smeulders**, the Curaçaoan scholar and curator, has been promoted to head of history at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, where she has been a curator since 2017.

**Loring Randolph**, director of Frieze New York, is stepping down from the organisation, which cancelled its physical fair this year.

Randolph, who has been artistic director of the fair since 2017, was only promoted to the directorship last September, but she blamed the pandemic for her decision to become director of the financially stable Nancy A Nasher and David J Haemisegger collection in Dallas: 'The Covid isolation has made me acutely aware of how much I miss being around art.'

## Correction

In *AM437*, the Profile of Michael Hanna was introduced with the previous Profile's intro. The inaccurate description stated that Hanna is based in London, whereas he is based in Belfast. The correct text can be found on the *AM* website. Apologies.

# They Call It Idlewild

## An artwork commissioned by Art Monthly

**Helen Cammock**

**Chris McCormack: In this time of furlough, limited social contact and movement, how might we recollect or practice doing nothing?**

Helen Cammock: Personally, internally, emotionally, doing nothing has been present in an extended form for me during lockdown – it has not been one of relaxed release from labour, I have been doing both *less* but also *more* during lockdown. The question is perhaps whether we understand what doing nothing is – does it mean an emptying of something? Or does idleness mean freedom from the traps of labour?

**Nothing might give space for something else to be seen.**

Many people were ill with Covid-19, as I was, and many people were dying. The inequalities in our society have been further exposed.

**Boycott, resignation and strike are the ways in which contracts of working are typically disrupted or questioned. Like many, the word furlough was new to me, which is telling.**

Labour has shifted for some – such as the office or school to the home – and the spaces in which we work have changed, perhaps for good in some cases, but we are still tied to capital, to labour. Again, for some this means working in isolation but it is still defined by those in charge. So what we might consider the freedom of the mind and the body continues unchanged – we are still locked into a space where idleness is contested and elusive.

**Work is still a social contract that confirms our place and status in the world. Does inaction continue to be harder for some more than others?**

I'm interested in how those constrained by labour, such as those working in warehouses or balancing several jobs, can find space for idleness. Some people are able to do this even in the most adverse conditions; to feel, to think, to write, to sing. The work is prompting the reader to find a moment of freedom.

**Do the two questions propose a state of change?**

Whether the magazine is read sequentially or not, I'm asking you to consider and to feel in response to two simple questions. There is a fluidity with the two questions bookending the magazine, similar to a conversation. How we experience the passage of time when reading makes for deeper reflection.

**Sara Ahmed quotes Peter Stallybrass in her 2019 book *What's the Use?* to point out that 'in the language of 19th century clothes makers and repairers, wrinkles in the elbows of a jacket or a sleeve we're called memories ... From a commercial point of view every wrinkle or memory was a devaluation of the commodity'. Is the memory of 'nothing' something that interrupts use and value?**

Perhaps a wrinkle can never be a memory of nothing because it is the lasting imprint of a person's lifetime, their actions and environment. Commodities are traded on the idea of the new, meaning the connections we have with others – another's action and life – are intrinsically linked to diminishing value. These 'wrinkles' are what we have to rewrite and reveal.

# Obituaries

## Keith Sonnier 1941–2020

When I invited Keith Sonnier to show a group of early works at Whitechapel Gallery in 2016, I was initially concerned that he might find the late-Victorian architecture distracting, with its brick-lined walls and ornamented pillars. To the contrary, Sonnier embraced the historic character of the gallery, and I came to understand that his materials were highly nuanced and culturally grounded. While his work with neon and incandescent light in the late 1960s grew out of the use of industrial materials in Minimalism, it was equally informed by his childhood experiences in the rich Cajun culture of Mamou in rural Louisiana. 'My first light pieces', he said, 'were influenced by seeing the way light hit the rice fields in Louisiana and you could see it from miles away and it would wash the landscape.' Sonnier's bilingual upbringing, speaking Acadian French dialect along with English, brought a poetry, cadence and multiple points of entry to his geometric and gestural forms, as evidenced by titles such as *Ba-O-Ba* and *Ju-Ju*. His adeptness with a range of materials – neon, electronics, foam rubber, satin – owe a debt to both his father, who owned a hardware store, and to his mother, a florist who collected old dresses and fabrics.

After Sonnier earned a degree in art and anthropology at the University of Southwestern Louisiana in 1968, he travelled to France, where he was influenced by Henri Matisse's handling of colour and form and by Robert Rauschenberg's metal assemblage *Oracle*, 1962–65, at the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris. Sonnier went on to earn an MFA in 1966 at Rutgers University in New Jersey. A crucible for Pop, Minimalism, Fluxus and performance, the school's faculty included Robert Morris, Allan Kaprow, Roy Lichtenstein, Yvonne Rainer and George Segal, and Joan Snyder and Jackie Winsor were among Sonnier's fellow students. He married Winsor, they moved to New York City and soon found themselves part of tight-knit community of downtown artists and musicians, including

Lynda Benglis, Philip Glass, Mary Heilman, Dickie Landry and Gordon Matta-Clark.

Sonnier began working with the gallerists Richard Bellamy in New York, Rolf Rieke in Cologne and, from the 1970s, with Leo Castelli in New York, and he also took part in two of the era's landmark exhibitions: Lucy Lippard's 'Eccentric Abstraction' at Fischbach Gallery in New York in 1966 and Harold Szeemann's seminal 1969 show 'Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form' at the Kunsthalle Bern and the Institute of Contemporary Art, London. Sonnier's playful and exuberant approach to a range of materials set him apart from many of his peers, as did his travels to India, Japan, Bali, Brazil and, later, Africa, which profoundly shaped his art. In the 1980s, he shifted from wall-based works to freestanding sculptures, incorporating bamboo and other organic materials and pigments. 'I sensed engagement with artworks as something more visceral and integrated into everyday life,' he later recalled, 'rather than something precious and removed.'

After he met his second wife, Nessia Pope, a writer and curator from Brazil, the birth of their daughter, Olympia, prompted Sonnier to buy a house in Bridgehampton, New York. The house and studio on Long Island afforded him an opportunity to reconnect with nature and the landscape, and also to undertake



Keith Sonnier, *Dot Dash Corner*, 1969, installation view, 'Keith Sonnier: Light Works, 1968–70', Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2016