

# LISSON GALLERY

*The Art Newspaper*

17 June 2016

<http://theartnewspaper.com/reports/earplugs-required-for-douglas-gordon-s-bound-to-hurt-performance-plus-more-basel-gossip/>

## THE ART NEWSPAPER

### SPECIAL REPORTS

## Earplugs required for Douglas Gordon's *Bound to Hurt* performance plus more Basel gossip

Life imitates art, beer bellies magnified in *Unlimited* installation, and so much more

by THE ART NEWSPAPER | 17 June 2016



### TOPICS

Fairs

Douglas Gordon and Philip Venables's performance *Bound to Hurt* Bound to Hurt © Kim Culetto

## Bound to Hurt (your ears)

“Bitte, bitte,” urged attendants at the Theater Basel, pressing earplugs into the hands of audience members there to see the Swiss premiere of Turner Prize-winning, Glasgow-born artist Douglas Gordon and composer Philip Venables’s *Bound to Hurt*. While it may seem counter-intuitive to distribute earplugs before what is essentially a contemporary opera, they turned out to be a most welcome piece of kit. The plot deals with domestic violence, and at times the soundtrack was loud enough to rumble seats. Jarring, spliced versions of pop classics such as *I Feel Love* and *Can’t Take My Eyes Off You* were performed by an onstage band that featured a musician who pounded his luridly lit drum with impressive right hooks. Empty wine bottles and tangled Christmas lights littered the stage—a landscape into which the performer Ruth Rosenfeld crawled, memorialising a broken relationship (the other half of whom is probably the lifeless figure under a sheet at stage left). “Remember the time we went to Brian’s party and you were like so drunk you threw up all over Archie?” she asks. “That was funny, wasn’t it?” Gordon is a student of violence but aside from the volume, the opera is fairly restrained. The most constant refrain is the sound of Rosenfeld knocking over empty wine bottles, which is amplified by a nearby microphone. Before Thursday’s performance, Gordon could be seen pouring an entire bottle of red wine onto the stage. For verisimilitude? No. “It’s a kind of blessing,” he explained.



Jonathan Monk's Exhibit Model One at Kunsthhaus Baselland. Photo: Dan Duray

## Navel-gazing of the highest order

There is no shortage of shows in the Art Basel institutional orbit, but should you tire of those, might an exhibition on exhibitions be of interest? The Kunsthau Baselland is showing Exhibit Model One, a conceptual meta-exhibition by the UK artist Jonathan Monk that seeks to examine “the conditions of an exhibition”. There are no works in Monk’s presentation, just giant black-and-white representations of installation views from previous shows his work was in, such as *Less Is More Than One Hundred Indian Bicycles*, at the Kunstraum Dornbirn in 2013. “My show might have the feel of walking through the pages of a crudely photocopied book,” Monk says in the catalogue. (True.) “I’m hoping the lack of objects will allow the viewer to focus on the spaces seen within the space.” Indeed, one comes away with a strong sense of the exhibition aesthetic: pacific, white and idiosyncratic in familiar and clearly defined ways. Surely such a show is not on during Art Basel by accident.



Vanja Smiljanic in front of Eric Fischl's *The Wall* (2016). Photo: Gareth Harris

## Life imitates art imitates life

Nobody was more surprised than Vanja Smiljanic when she opened the Wednesday edition of *The Art Newspaper's* daily coverage of Art Basel. The staffer at the Brussels-based gallery Waldburger Wouters thought that the woman depicted in Eric Fischl's work *The Wall*, on sale at the stand of New York's Skarstedt gallery, looked familiar (that hair, that blouse). It then dawned on Smiljanic that she was the figure depicted in Fischl's art-world pic splashed across our front page. “I thought I was

hallucinating! I think it was at Art Brussels,” she says, going so far as to take a selfie in front of the painting wearing the same clothes, doing the artiest double-take at the fair.





Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Zoom Pavilion (2015).  
Photo: Emily Sharpe

## Beer bellies verboten in Unlimited work

The Zoom Pavilion, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer and Krzysztof Wodiczko's installation at Unlimited that uses James Bond-like surveillance technology and facial recognition software to zoom in on fairgoers faces and —ahem—bodies, may be a major talking point, but not everyone is thrilled with the all-too-real images that confront them. A US art dealer, who preferred to

remain anonymous, said that most of his fellow gallerists felt the need to take a sharp breath inside the interactive pavilion so that their stomachs “looked tight and they looked suitably buff”. Our advice: skip the second helping of bratwurst, suck in your gut and get ready for your Basel close-up.



Darren Bader, video file (BTD), 3min, 52 sec, edition of 3 + a/p. © the artist, courtesy Sadie Coles HQ, London



## Sting, the Minotaur and the dental floss

You should never miss a Darren Bader work at an art fair, and Art Basel is no exception. This year, London's Sadie Coles HQ gallery has brought a new film entitled video file (BTD), in which the aging rockers Billy Joel, Elton John and Sting have been cast in the roles of the Three Fates from Greek mythology. It begins with two digital helicopters flying out of a giant animated mouth, spinning what looks like dental floss as a voice portends salvation in the form of the goddess Ariadne, whose thread helped Theseus escape the Minotaur's maze. This cuts to archival footage of Joel and John, playing together and separately over the years. A voice mythologises them: "His closest companion, his piano," it says over footage of Joel, "on which he writes his legend". As the story progresses, Joel, John and Sting end up being shipwrecked and their rescue is announced via a fake television news report. The work is less than four minutes long but it feels quite a bit longer. "I think Darren Bader can change the way you look at the world," says Amanda Sharp, the co-founder of the Frieze art fair. The work is on sale in an edition of three, with artist's proof, for \$25,000.

# LISSON GALLERY

*moussemagazine.it*

1st December 2014

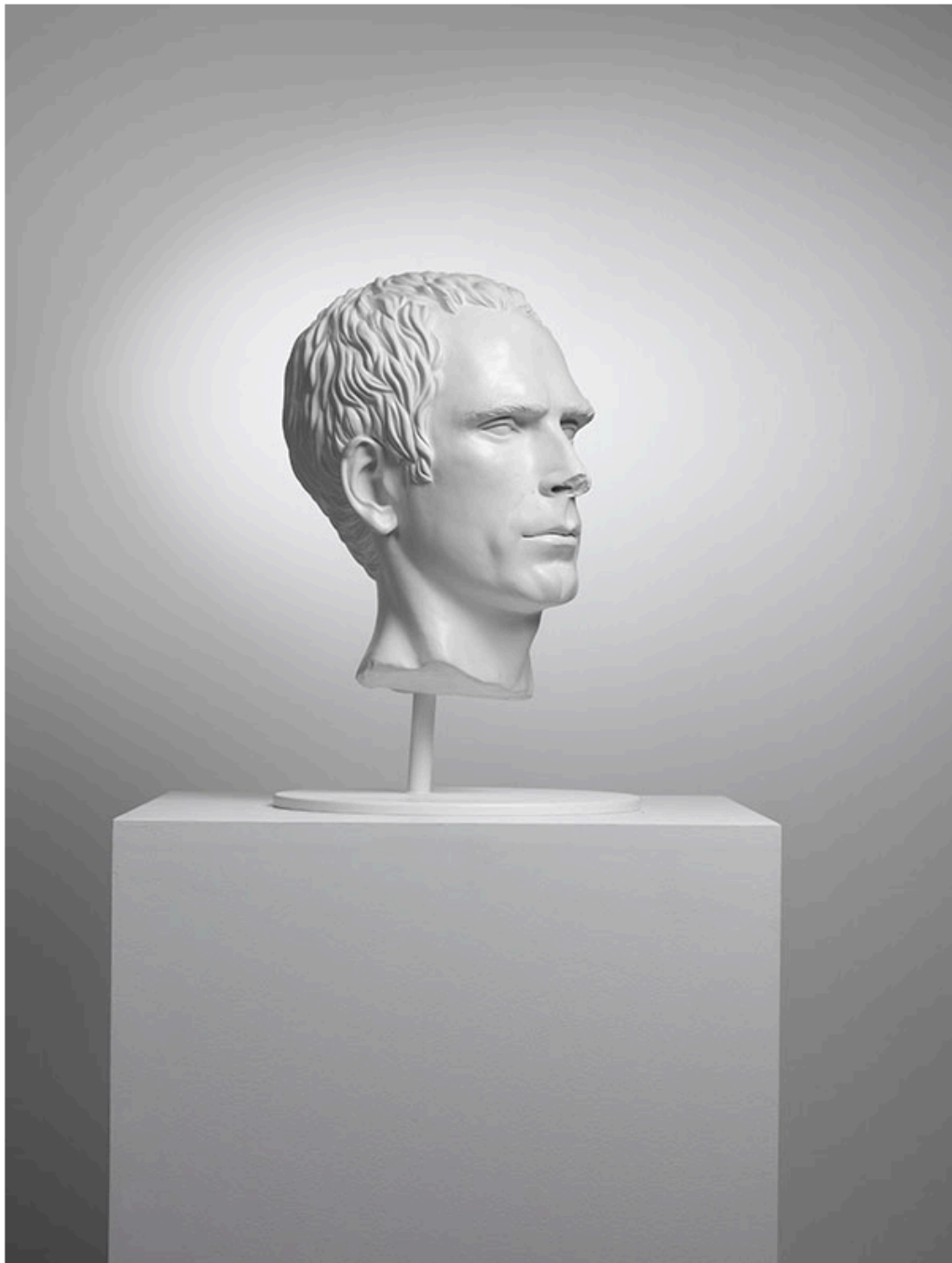
HOME - MOUSSE - MAGAZINE - EXTRA - PUBLISHING - AGENCY

About us  
Staff  
Contact

Current issue  
Archive  
Subscribe  
Distribution  
Advertising

Extra content  
Special projects  
TFQ  
The Artist as Curator

**Jonathan Monk "I ♥ 1984"**



For his sixth solo exhibition at Lisson Gallery, Jonathan Monk revisits narratives drawn from his own biography and transforms historical works by artists that have also proved to be personal, formative influences. A new wall-hung assemblage of stitched together souvenir tea towels, entitled *My Life Within the Lives of Others II* (2014), marks every year and indeed every day since his birth so far, with 46 anachronistic cloth calendars showing different species of Australian birds, Swiss chalet exteriors and other kitsch scenes. Fragments of his parents' 1970s curtain material are rendered in photographic works that return them to framed, window-like settings, despite the fabrics clearly being discarded as drop cloths for subsequent domestic redecoration. Among the moving portraits of Monk's family is a slideshow that magnifies one image of them 80 times over, through which the artist is reflected in his child's gaze—as titled, Monk is literally *Searching for My Father in My Sister's Eyes* (2002)—while a series of childhood or holiday snaps, *Same Time In A Different Place*, are each juxtaposed with a vintage invitation card, for shows by the likes of Dan Graham, Sol LeWitt or On Kawara, sourced from the same date.

In stark contrast to such close-to-home subject matter, Monk has assembled a monumental installation of seven minimalist metal structures, each of these specially built and coloured-coded pallets containing a shipment of rocks gathered from seven different contested territories in the Middle East: Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Israel and Syria (although no rocks could be gathered from this last location). These enclosed tranches of landscape, culturally displaced and geopolitically charged, relate to Land Art exponent Robert Smithson's "Non-Site" series, for which he re-displayed earth excavated from specific areas in similar, pallet-shaped sculptural containers within a gallery. Other homages to recent heroes of art history include *Blow Up*, Monk's tongue-in-cheek destruction of the photographic work of German couple Bernd and Hilla Becher. Monk mimics their grids of monochromatic studies of industrial architecture, except the cooling towers and gas cylinders are toppling over and imploding in the process of being demolished.

While these two dominant poles of Monk's practice—his familial inheritance and his art historical inheritance—can seem worlds apart, many pieces weave together both strands. The life-sized, white ceramic *Pig* (2012) is both a scaled-up version of a piggy bank from his childhood and an imagining of an unrealised sculpture by Jeff Koons, as noted by the American artist as an alternative for his famous metallic bunny. Similarly, Monk's imposing self-portrait busts inspired by idealised Greco-Roman statuary, has each had its nose smited by a famous Italian artist of the Arte Povera generation, such as Jannis Kounellis, Gilberto Zorio or Emilio Prini, as well as by Monk himself.

Throughout the exhibition, Monk's authentic, artistic authorship variously raises or lowers its head above the parapets, either reaffirming his life's work or else channelling the work of others. The sight of numerous melancholic objects—a discarded piano cover, carved from wood, or a neon lightbox blinking between life and death—suggests a reflective strand in Monk's work, both lamenting time past and lauding bygone art historical heydays, especially so in the nostalgic title that references key literary and musical touchstones, "I ♥ 1984."

at Lisson Gallery, London

until 17 January 2015









# LISSON GALLERY

L'Officiel, Paris  
Summer 2013





# JONATHAN MONK VS JEFF KOONS “LAPIN DÉGONFLÉ”

La démarche artistique multidisciplinaire de Jonathan Monk, teintée d'ironie et de nostalgie pour l'art conceptuel des années 1960, remet en cause la figure de l'artiste-génie en se fondant sur son histoire personnelle et familiale. Quoi de mieux, pour démystifier la pureté du processus créatif, que de s'allier au maître néo-pop de la provocation, Jeff Koons ? Par Jonathan Monk.

**T**out a commencé à New York en 2007. Je me trouvais dans un bar. C'était soit très tard, soit assez tôt. Je crois que c'était à Broadway, mais il faisait nuit. Dans ce bar, on m'a présenté quelqu'un que nous appellerons M. X.

M. X travaillait avec des artistes. Il voulait aider les artistes à réaliser des projets impossibles.

Il m'a demandé d'imaginer quelque chose de difficile. N'importe quoi. J'ai tout de suite répondu qu'on pourrait dégonfler Jeff Koons.

Le contexte a sans doute contribué à cette idée.

"Vos désirs sont des ordres", a dit M. X.

J'ai quitté Manhattan en pensant que cette rencontre n'était rien qu'un rêve, une idée parmi d'autres, qui resterait confinée à l'établissement. Mais quelques semaines plus tard, un M. X agité a donné suite à ma proposition indécente.

M. Koons avait récemment ouvert une exposition de sculptures grand format à la Gagosian Gallery de Londres et M. X voulait extraire une partie de l'air de ces splendides objets flambant neufs.

Ce projet me semblait être une entreprise trop ambitieuse que je n'aurais pas eu le courage de poursuivre jusqu'au bout.

J'ai dit à M. X que nous devrions plutôt commencer avec quelque chose de plus petit : Rabbit (1986) serait le véhicule parfait pour mon idée.

J'étais proche de ce lapin durant mes études d'art : il représentait un soutien moral impossible à ignorer, à la fois brillant et crétin.

J'ai laissé à M. X le soin de tout organiser.

J'ai fait des croquis, j'ai fait faire des croquis. Je me suis procuré des jouets gonflables pour les soumettre à une batterie de tests stricts.

M. X a pris des centaines de photographies de l'œuvre réelle au Lacma (Musée d'art du comté de Los Angeles), chaque angle méticuleusement enregistré.

Tous les secrets de production ont été jalousement gardés. On m'a tenu dans l'ignorance.

Un manque de communication étrangement déconcertant.

J'imaginai que les sculptures seraient moulées en acier inoxydable, mais il s'est avéré qu'elles seraient finalement forgées et martelées en

Chine, comme une armure à la surface miroitante.

L'environnement qui soutenait mon projet s'est transformé, mais les problèmes financiers globaux rencontrés n'ont fait que constituer le contexte idéal à mes sculptures dégonflées.

Lorsque j'ai exposé cinq de ces œuvres dégonflées chez Casey Kaplan à New York en mai 2009, Jeff Koons est venu et a écrit dans le livre d'or : "Exactement comme les miens", ce qui m'a fait plaisir.



Jeff Koons, *Rabbit*, 1986, acier inoxydable, 104,1 x 48,3 x 30,5 cm, édition de 3 exemplaires et 1 épreuve d'artiste.



Jonathan Monk  
*Deflated Sculpture no. II*, 2009, acier  
inoxydable, 71,1cm x  
73,7cm x 39,4 cm,  
édition 1 de 2.



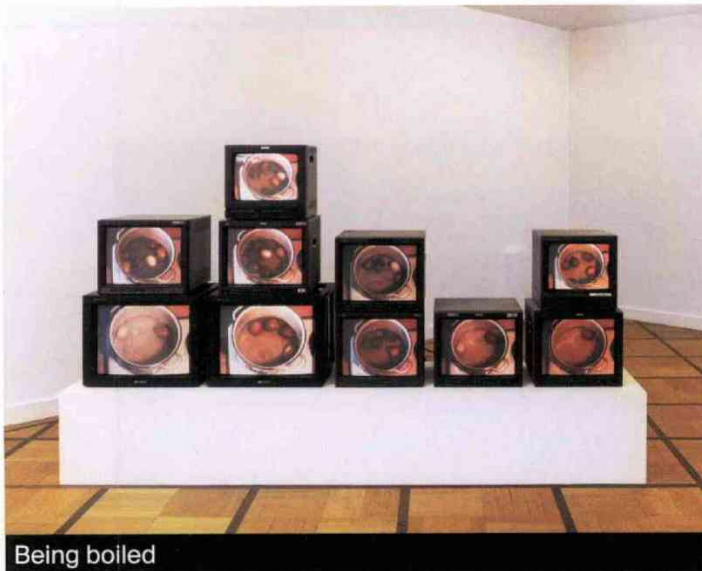
---

#### À VOIR

"In Between exhibitions", galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris 3<sup>e</sup>, interventions entre deux expositions jusqu'à la fin de l'année. "100 Indian Bicycles", Kunstraum, Dornbirn (Autriche), du 27 juin au 26 août. Centro de Arte Contemporáneo, Malaga (Espagne), du 27 septembre au 8 décembre. **Jonathan Monk** est représenté par Yvon Lambert (Paris), Artelier (Graz), Casey Kaplan (New York), Cristina Guerra (Lisbonne), Dvir Gallery (Tel Aviv), Lisson Gallery (Milan et Londres), Meyer Riegger (Berlin), Nicolai Wallner (Copenhague), Sonia Rosso (Turin), WCW (Hambourg).

# LISSON GALLERY

Art Review  
1<sup>st</sup> May 2013



Jonathan Monk adds an egg to a pan of water. Egg cooks. Film ends. Jonathan Monks adds two eggs to a pan. Eggs cook. Film ends. Jonathan Monk adds three, four, five – up to ten eggs to a pan, each Super 8 film lasting a little longer, reflecting the time it takes for the relevant quantities of eggs to cook. The artist has now produced a boxed edition of ten (titled *Soft Boiled Egg 1/10*, *Soft Boiled Eggs 2/10*, *Soft Boiled Eggs 3/10*, etc), each featuring a unique original Super 8 film roll and a DVD transfer (pictured monitors not included) for the the Centre d'Édition Contemporaine in Geneva. Why? In the artist's own words: 'I like boiled eggs and I couldn't escape from them! – for me they represented the beginning of something. In this case the egg and not the chicken.'

*c-e-c.ch*

**CHF 2,500**



## frieze

### Without (Jonathan Monk)

MEESSEN DE CLERCQ, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM



Dan Rees, *VariablePiece vs. JonathanMonk*, 2006

'Without (Jonathan Monk)' was a stirring conversation around and about the artist Jonathan Monk, though neither he nor his work were present. Monk's voice, however, could undeniably be detected through the works of the ten selected artists, who conspicuously cited or appropriated Monk's own. Curator Adam Carr integrated these contemporary contributions with works he selected from Monk's personal collection, by artists including Robert Barry, Sol LeWitt and Allen Ruppersberg. Monk's practice creates a continuous loop of references to Conceptual and Minimalist works from the 1960s and '70s by these artists and their ilk, whom he humorously cites, so as to call into question originality and authorship. The exhibition reproduced Monk's gestures and strategies, resulting in a stream of echoes and overlapping conversations between Monk, his Conceptualist predecessors and his contemporaries.

As the works combined to represent the artist's practice through their own, the autobiographical component that typically underlies Monk's work was consequently displaced or redirected towards new narratives. Ryan Gander's *Enough to Start Over* (2006), for example, begins with *Monk's To Tears* (2006), a passport photograph of Monk at age 13 with teardrop earrings pinned to his eyes. Monk subsequently sold the art work to Gander, who removed the earrings from the photograph, sending the jewellery to his mother, who wears them in the passport photo that constitutes Gander's work. Similarly, in *Jonathan Monk* (2012), Alek O. embroidered a solid black fabric once belonging to Monk onto a canvas, transforming Monk's garment into a portrait of the artist. Alternately austere and poetic, O.'s work creates a new narrative that is both personal and conceptual.

Other works took inspiration directly from Monk's own. *What If, If So?* (2005) is a photograph documenting Olivier Babin's revision of Monk's performative series 'Waiting for Famous People' (1995), for which Monk waited at the airport holding signs with names such as Marcel Duchamp, the Pope or Elvis Presley. In 2005, at Babin's request, Monk found himself again at the airport, this time holding a sign with the name Olivier Babin. Ron Terada's *For Sale, Jonathan Monk, The Sun Never Really Sets* (2007) literally reframes Monk's *The Sun Never Really Sets*. The silkscreen print is Monk's copy of a page from a Sotheby's catalogue selling an Ed Ruscha print, which is here represented as a work of Terada's. The print appears faded by the many lives or layers of the image, giving it a quality of both artefact and art work.

The repetition and remixing in the show was incessant, with the theme resonating across the gallery much like the distant sound of a ping-pong ball bouncing back and forth on a table. This came from Dan Rees's *Variable Piece vs. Jonathan Monk* (2006), which immediately greeted you upon entrance to the gallery and lured you towards the back, where you found an audio recording of Monk playing table tennis with Simon Starling. The three-part piece also included a video projection of the game and a framed image of the ping-pong ball. Although the sound was seemingly monotonous, the ball's to and fro recalled the levity behind much of the show.

Pieces from Monk's personal collection, which includes many of Conceptual art's canonized artists, were interspersed throughout, suggesting a fluidity across pieces and artistic movements. For instance, Carr coupled Ed Ruscha's *Ed Ruscha says goodbye to college joys* (1967) and *Sweets, Meats, Sheets (from the tropical fish series)* (1975) with Terada's piece and Yann Sérandour's *Book Deal* (2005), another work recontextualizing Ruscha and Monk. Ruscha's dryly humorous photographs retained a certain aura in the face of Terada and Sérandour's attempts to resell an index of Ruscha's work. With the latter appearing to annex the semantic characteristics that so heavily defined Conceptual art, the juxtaposition of these four works served to reinforce the deeply rooted Conceptual legacy that informs Monk and his contemporaries. As much as the works included were source material for the artists in the show, however, letting the historical narrative unfold, the exhibition's concentration on Monk eclipsed other possible readings. Ultimately, his looming presence muted their impact and individuality.

**Elize Mazadiego**