



## Transferring Cultures into Bodies

curated by Adriana González Hulshof

Faig Ahmed, Karim Adduchi,  
Lisa Konno, Paul Kooiker, Ana Navas,  
Aimée Zito Lema & Elisa van Joolen  
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Adriana González Hulshof was born in Mexico and grew up in Peru, later in the Netherlands. Her own memories and experiences were formed by a mix of colors, sounds and a wealth of images. That background made her curious about how we deal with the influences of diverse cultures. How do you perceive the world when you grow up with an ever-changing perspective of traditions and customs and their intrinsic value systems? How do you observe the world when your own observation is rooted in the visual language of those various cultures?

The invitation to curate an exhibition at tegenboschvanvreden for Amsterdam Art Weekend's tenth edition was, for Adriana González Hulshof, a wonderful opportunity to draw on those personal issues in contemplating the work of artists whose practice relates to visual art and fashion. Fashion and visual art can tell stories about rituals, about cultures, about time, about the lives of people. This became the point of departure for the exhibition *Transferring Cultures into Bodies*.

The artists included in *Transferring Cultures into Bodies* have in common the aspect that they use their work, consciously or unconsciously, to investigate their cultural heritage, break with traditions and stereotypes, combine them or in fact place them in a new context. Their artistic practice spans a range of fields, among them visual art, fashion, craft and mass production. Culture and subculture go hand in hand. The work of these artists shows how various elements can be interwoven. For Faig Ahmed, Karim Adduchi, Lisa Konno, Paul Kooiker, Ana Navas, Aimée Zito Lema & Elisa van Joolen the artistic approach is dynamic and fluid. It aims to tell (socially relevant) stories and to present these in a visual manner.



**Faig Ahmed** (1982, AZ) is an internationally recognized artist from Baku, Azerbaijan, who represented his country at the Venice Biennale in 2007. He has become known for his conceptual, sculptural work which focuses on the visual language of carpets. With his deconstructions of traditions and stereotypes, Ahmed stretches visual limits by uncommonly combining this traditional craft, imbued with history and symbolism, with present-day digitally distorted images. On the computer Ahmed produces sketches for his carpets; their execution involves complicated traditional weaving techniques. One such carpet is *Golden in the Garden*, from 2018. Like all of Ahmed's carpets, it is handmade according to a conventional pattern which has, as it were, been damaged. In this case it looks as though a golden yellow splotch of paint has been poured directly from the can onto the carpet. By disrupting the original image Ahmed shows how, as he himself says, "Ideas that have been formed for ages are being changed in moments."

**Karim Adduchi** (1988, MA/ES/NL) is an illustrator and fashion designer. He grew up in the mountains of Imzouren, in Morocco, and lived in Spain for many years. After finishing art school in Barcelona, he moved to Amsterdam in order to further his development here. In his first show, which drew the attention of the international press, his personal background played a major role. He became a role model as an advocate of mixed cultures. Adduchi isn't afraid to use political elements in his work: he once dedicated a show to Syrian refugees and involved them in his work. His personal and new approach which includes exchanges between Arabic and Western cultures is unusual and influential. On display in the exhibition is *Nefertiti*, a beautiful work made of embroidered silk thread. The art-historical reference to the world-famous Egyptian bust is subtly mixed with references to religious rules for covering the face, but also to the face masks required during the pandemic.

**Lisa Konno** (1992, JP/NL) is a fashion designer, filmmaker and artist. Her work is characterized by a combination of activism, aesthetics and humor.

Sustainability and cultural identity play a key role. Konno works on projects that use fashion as a means of portraying socially relevant issues. In 2015 she began producing collections of textile waste that made statements about unethical practices in the fashion industry. Since she worked on the short film *NOBU* – a stylized portrait of her father – making films has become a way of telling stories by means of fashion.

For this exhibition Adriana González Hulshof has brought together works from a film triptych. The costumes from the three films – *NOBU*, *BABA* and *Henk* – consist of long coats in various colors and materials. In the installation these are presented together with the film in which they appear.

**Paul Kooiker** (1964, NL) is sooner an installation artist than a photographer *pur sang*. Kooiker does not aim to create the perfect photographic image. His work always comes about in the postproduction phase, in the selection and manipulation of his images. Over the past years Kooiker has produced, in addition to his autonomous work, many photographs for fashion labels and magazines. He has collaborated with brands such as Rick Owens and Marni and published fashion

series in *Vogue Italia*, *Dazed*, *Another Magazine*, *Vanity Fair*, *M le Monde*, *New York Times Magazine* and other periodicals. These fashion assignments give Kooiker the opportunity to experiment with new ideas for his work.

**Ana Navas** (1984, VE/EC) is a multimedia artist. In her work she focuses on the relationship between 'high' and popular culture. Ideas such as transformation, assimilation and appropriation play an important role in this. Navas investigates the constant transformations of artistic ideas, forms and images. In the 'afterlife' of an artwork it becomes visible how it is assimilated into other visual 'languages' – such as the world of marketing and advertising, but also the digital world – and how it thereby seeps into day-to-day life in ever-changing forms. In her visual language she connects mass-produced household articles with objects that she produces herself, links the formal aesthetics of modernism to everyday materials, and she uses oil paint to experiment with do-it-yourself techniques found on the Internet. In this way Ana Navas questions the relationship between art and daily life, between the original and the copy.

*Our Rags Magazine* is a project initiated by visual artist **Aimée Zito Lema** (1982, NL/AR) and designer **Elisa van Joolen** (1983, NL/IT). In this collaborative project they investigate transformative processes, during which they make proposals for new forms of collective production aimed at the reuse of textiles (clothing). *Our Rags Magazine* questions our consumer behavior and its relationship to the world in which we live.

The project began with a workshop in which children were invited to think of new ways to make clothing. The workshop revolved around the dissection of articles of clothing discarded by the children. All of this clothing was cut into small pieces and recycled into a new material: paper. A Dutch windmill in Loenen (NL) is still able to carry out the age-old technique of transforming old rags into cotton-based paper. Here the shredded clothing was transformed into coarse-grained and tactile sheets of paper which make up the concrete basis of the project. In return the children received the rag paper, and together they made their new, imaginative clothing with this.

*Our Rags Magazine* – which will be presented at the end of May – further expands the potential of recycled material, due to the fact that a fashion publication is being printed on this material. Here is a magazine where the pages not only *show* clothing, but actually *are* clothing. Designed by Elisabeth Klement, the magazine contains contributions by photographer Janneke van der Hagen and writers Maria Barnas and Persis Bekkering. *Our Rags* aims to stimulate the invention of new possibilities for our fashion system and is meant to be an ode to collective creativity.

*Our Rags Magazine* is part of the project *Pulp*. In this ongoing collaborative project, Aimée Zito Lema and Elisa van Joolen reflect on the lifespan of an article of clothing, or on its physical presence and material quality. Central to the project *Pulp* is the idea of transformation.

**Adriana González Hulshof** (Mexico City, 1981) was Founder and Director of Amsterdam Art Weekend (2012-2018). Currently, she is Business Director of Museum Kranenburgh, Bergen North Holland. She worked for the Dutch National Opera & Ballet; Developed art programs and partnerships for organizations such as the Prince Claus Fund with The Museo de Antioquia in Medellín, ArtHub Asia in Shanghai; The International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam and others. Also she has been working as curator, consultant, gallerist and costume designer.