

COLLECTION ON DISPLAY:

OSCAR TUAZON, BANKS VIOLETTE

February 17–May 13, 2018

Collection on Display showcases art from the collections of the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst. The new installation puts the focus on sprawling sculptures by Oscar Tuazon (b. 1975, USA) and Banks Violette (b. 1973, USA). Despite the considerable differences between their formal aesthetics, both artists' works point up the fragility of our existence. Tuazon's sculptural objects bear the visible marks of physical disintegration; Violette signals decay with a symbolism informed by the iconography of heavy metal music.

Curator:
Nadia Schneider Willen
(collection curator, Migros
Museum für Gegenwarts-
kunst)

Oscar Tuazon's art explores questions concerning the potential interplay between architecture, the routines of daily life, and art. Employing a reduced architectural idiom, he relays the essence of his inquiry into the exhibition space, making arrangements of basic construction materials that bristle with barely restrained physical energy. His interventions pose a challenge to the gallery's architecture and test the mechanical resilience of staples such as concrete and steel. This aspect of his work is most readily apparent in the heavy concrete object titled *I use my body for something, I use it to make something, I make something with my body, whatever that is. I make something and I pay for it and I get paid for it* (2010). One leg of the table-like sculpture has cracked, and it is coming apart, barely keeping its other leg upright. The crumbling fragments are both, relict of an archaeology of industry, and a characteristic element of our architectural environments. The title is a metaphorical reference to Tuazon's approach to art-making: as a "craftsman," the artist invests his physical labor in order to infiltrate unwieldy and dysfunctional objects and spaces into the cycle of capitalist value creation and extraction.

The ceiling-mounted sculpture the artist created in 2010 likewise probes the limits of the ability of his materials to withstand stress. It consists of canvas stretched over a metal framework; illuminated from above, the work is filled with water. As a semitransparent membrane, the tarpaulin encases an interior space that feels like an alien presence in the gallery. The title captures this relation between body and space, interior and exterior: *I want to put something inside my body and carry something in it. I want to get inside my body and get carried in it, I'd like to get buried in it, put my head in it and get in it, I'm not scared of it.*

Tuazon's two-track sound piece *My Flesh to Your Bare Bones* (2010) was conceived as a dialogue with the performance artist and architect Vito Acconci (1940–2017). Acconci drew up the text *Antarctica of the Mind* (2004) as a kind of utopian blueprint for the British research station "Halley II" in Antarctica; his proposal was never realized. The recording guides the listener in imagining a virtual place unconnected to any points of reference: "So think of this world as a white sheet of paper, a blank page," Acconci's voice instructs the visitor before furnishing his virtual world with balloon-like structures made of light. Tuazon responds to the audio recording by combining it with his own voice in a simultaneous confrontation. Spoken in the perspective of a first-person narrator, his sentences transport the body to Acconci's immaterial and featureless landscape and compete with it in a subjective and almost vulnerable manner.

MIGROS MUSEUM FÜR
GEGENWARTSKUNST
LIMMATSTRASSE 270
CH-8005 ZÜRICH

T +41 44 277 20 50
F +41 44 277 62 86
INFO@MIGROSMUSEUM.CH

Banks Violette's sculptures and objects harness a repertoire of signifiers drawn from heavy metal subcultures. Black and death metal emerged in Northern Europe and the Anglo-Saxon countries in the second half of the 1980s; song lyrics in these genres tend to revolve around suffering and death. A metal band's image is defined by its visual presentation on album covers and in stage shows no less than by the music. The iconography cultivated by these subcultures consists in a theatrical symbolism of death and decline that balances between beauty and cruelty and cannibalizes our collective visual culture, appropriating elements and motifs of "high art"—like the skull, a symbol of mortality widespread in Baroque still-life painting—to charge them with new meaning. In the sculptures on display in the gallery, however, Banks, rather than directly reusing symbols from metal culture, establishes a stage-like situation whose minimalist aesthetic recalls the static setting of a concert venue.

The sculpture *Kill Yourself (Twin)* (2006) is framed by two horizontal stage elements: cast epoxy resin objects whose look is reminiscent of minimalism. One is firmly set on the ground, while the other is precariously suspended from the ceiling. A jumbled construction of tube lights between them tilts forward off the platform and sprawls toward the floor, creating the impression that the stage elements exert a downward pressure on the luminous object. The work is flanked by *Today, Tomorrow, and Always (Seven Panels)* (2006), an installation of wall components made of hardened salt whose structure brings the acoustic panels in concert halls and music rehearsal rooms to mind. Their crystalline surfaces contrast with the polished epoxy resin faces of the stage elements.

MIGROS MUSEUM FÜR
GEGENWARTSKUNST
LIMMATSTRASSE 270
CH-8005 ZÜRICH

T +41 44 277 20 50
F +41 44 277 62 86
INFO@MIGROMUSEUM.CH

MIGROMUSEUM.CH
MIGROS-CULTURE-PERCENTAGE.CH



Oscar Tuazon
I use my body for something, I use it to make something, I make something with my body, whatever that is. I make something and I pay for it and I get paid for it.
2010
Concrete, rebar, mesh
Ca. 77 x 450 x 410 cm



Banks Violette
Today, Tomorrow, and Always (Seven Panels)
2006
Galvanized steel pipes, aluminum, plywood, combined salt
Ca. 920 x 300 cm, height variable



Oscar Tuazon
I want to put something inside my body and carry something in it. I want to get inside my body and get carried in it, I'd like to get buried in it, put my head in it and get in it, I'm not scared of it.
2010
Welded steel, clamps, canvas, fluorescent tubes, water
60 x 495 x 218 cm



Banks Violette
Kill Yourself (Twin)
2006
Galvanized steel pipes, steel, aluminum, plywood, colored epoxy resin, fluorescent tubes with fittings and accessories, 3 flight cases
Ca. 570 x 570 cm, height variable

Vito Acconci & Oscar Tuazon
My Flesh to Your Bare Bones
2010
Two-channel audio installation
Edition: 3/6 + 3 ap
8:04 min., 9:46 min.

MIGROS MUSEUM FÜR
GEGENWARTSKUNST
LIMMATSTRASSE 270
POSTFACH 1766
CH-8005 ZÜRICH

T +41 44 277 20 50
F +41 44 277 62 86
INFO@MIGROMUSEUM.CH

MIGROMUSEUM.CH
MIGROS-KULTURPROZENT.CH