

crazinisT artisT: *Rituals of Becoming*

Curated by Maria Rus Bojan

26 February - 12 March 2017

There will be a performance, talk & reception on the opening day, 26 February



crazinisT artisT, *x in REd*, performance at blaxTARLINES, Kumasi, 2016, image courtesy the artist, photo by Nii Okanta Ankrh

Gallery 1957 is proud to present *Rituals of Becoming*, a new exhibition by the Ghanaian-Togolese artist Va-Bene Elikem Fiatsi, who works under the pseudonym crazinisT artisT, from 26 February - 12 March 2017.

Consisting of a theatrical installation that displays multichannel video projections, a readymade sculpture and a performance from the artist, the exhibition explores the assumed distinctions between gender identity, class, political injustice, violence and the objectification of humans. The immersive installation is composed from female clothes gathered and worn by the artist over the years, while the video installation depicts crazinisT artisT's daily rituals of transformation. Collectively, these objects and videos question the strict categories of gender definition by urging us to rethink the fundamental construction of identity and gender performance.

Additionally, the artist will perform live, giving the exhibition a tangible sense of the ritual involved in his process of stripping one identity in order to assume another. Through crazinisT artisT's 'drag' (the clothing associated with one gender role when worn by a person of another gender) performances, the artist aims to denaturalise and re-signify categories of the body, sex and sexuality in order to perform a subversive re-signification and proliferation of gender beyond the existing binary frame.

Likewise, elements of washing in the performance constitute a purifying ritual, where the traces of an identity are stripped bare and washed away in preparation for a new identity to be forged. Through his performances, crazinisT artisT disrupts the idea that sexual identity is coherent along the axis of feminine/masculine, showing its failures to reflect the complexity of human nature. His performances essentially establish a new understanding of Self and Other, where the Other is not located in another individual, but part of the same body.

Through *Rituals of Becoming*, crazinisT artisT also considers the socio-political marginalisation of minority groups; exploring both the personal and societal implications of reconsidering gender identity.

Text courtesy Maria Rus Bojan.

About crazinisT artist

crazinisT artisT (b. 1981, Ho, Volta Region, Ghana), aka Va-Bene Elikem Fiatsi, currently lives and works in Kumasi, Ghana. He received his Bachelor Degree in Fine Arts from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi in 2014, where he is currently pursuing his MFA. crazinisT artisT has performed and exhibited internationally including: *BONE Performance Festival*, Progr - Zentrum für Kulturproduktion, Bern (2016); *Action Arts Lab*, The Basement at City Screen, York (2016); *Cornfields in Accra*, National Museum of Science and Technology, Accra (2016); *if you love me...*, Loco Shed, Kumasi (2016); *The Gown Must Go To Town...*, National Museum of Science and Technology, Accra (2015); *Silence Between the Lines*, Prime Motors Ltd., Kumasi (2015); *The Return of the Slaves*, Elmina Castle, Elmina (2015); *Protest Exhibition*, Hazard Gallery, Johannesburg (2015); *TERRITOIRE DE CRÉATION 5ieme edition*, Lome (2015); *African Electronics*, Chale Wote Street Art Festival, Accra (2015); and the *KNUST End of Year Exhibition*, Nubuke Foundation, Accra (2014).

About Maria Rus Bojan

An international curator, art advisor and writer based in Amsterdam, Maria Rus Bojan established MB Art Agency in 2008. Throughout her extensive career, Bojan has directed or curated at institutions including: Museum of Art, Cluj-Napoca; Sindan Cultural Foundation, Bucharest; OK Center for Contemporary Art, Linz; Casino Luxembourg - Forum d'Art Contemporain, Luxembourg City; Tranzit Foundation, Cluj; MNAC- National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest.

Bojan has curated extensively around performance, working on multiple exhibitions and publications with artist Ulay, including his major retrospective, *GEN.E.T.RATION ULTIMA RATIO*, Centro Parraga, Murcia (2005); *Art in the New Field of Visibility*, De Brakke Grond, Amsterdam (2008); *Ready Media*, NIMK, Amsterdam and The Contemporary Art Museum, Belgrade (2008); *Locked-In*, Casino Luxembourg - Forum d'Art Contemporain, Luxembourg City (2008); *Strategies for Concealing*, C-Space, Beijing (2008); *Tales of the Unexpected*, Art Rotterdam, Rotterdam (2010); *ULAY - A Retrospective*, Salon Dahlmann, Berlin (2013). She co-curated *Performing History*, for the Romanian Pavilion for the 54th edition of the International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia (2011). She is a member of the Russia and Eastern Europe Acquisition Committee at Tate, and the International Association of Art Critics (AICA).

www.gallery1957.com

 @Gallery1957

 @Gallery1957

 Gallery1957

For press information and images please contact:

Sophie Campos or Francesca Meale at Pelham Communications

Tel: +44 (0) 208 969 3959

Email: sophie@pelhamcommunications.com or
francesca@pelhamcommunications.com

Exhibition: crazinisT artisT: *Rituals of Becoming*

Dates: 26 February - 12 March 2017

Address: Gallery 1957, Kempinski Hotel Gold Coast City, PMB 66 — Ministries,
Gamel Abdul Nasser Avenue, Ridge — Accra, Ghana

Telephone: +233 303967575