

KÜNSTLERHAUS BETHANIEN

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Berlin, 6th January 2020

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to invite you to the opening of the following exhibitions:

HYELIM CHA

Bellows Hill

GÜLSIN KETENCI

WOMEN ATHLETES

Sports Against All Odds

EMI OTAGURO

Mesa

ANNA RÚN TRYGGVADÓTTIR

An Ode – poriferal phases

and

OPEN STUDIOS

Artists* of the International Studio Programme

16th January, 7 – 10 pm

Joint opening: **THURSDAY, 16TH JANUARY, FROM 7 PM**
Showroom at Kottbusser Straße 10

Exhibitions: **17TH JANUARY – 9TH FEBRUARY 2020**
Tuesday – Sunday, 14 – 19h

ATELIERS UND BÜROS: Kohlfurter Straße 41-43 · 10999 Berlin · SCHAURAUM: Kottbusser Straße 10

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RECHTSFORM: Künstlerhaus Bethanien GmbH · SITZ: Berlin · AG Charlottenburg

GESCHÄFTSFÜHRUNG: Christoph Tannert · Andrea Boche · HANDELSREGISTER: HRG 8089

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HYELIM CHA

In her paintings, videos and sculptures, Hyelim Cha shows non-linear and literary narratives consisting of several levels, which depict a wealth of information from contemporary media. The focus of her work is the individual as an independent being in the information society, as well as the relationship between community, society and the individual as conveyed through our modern media. Over the years, the artist has developed a unique, multi-layered language of metaphors and symbols, inspired by mythologies, historical and contemporary developments, film, architecture, music, and socio-cultural themes.

Cha has based her solo exhibition *Bellows Hill* at Künstlerhaus Bethanien on two pictorial associations: on the one hand, the idea of a Berlin underworld full of secrets, on the foundation of which contemporary Berlin exists; on the other hand, the image of an artist's inner world, of the artist as their own underworld.

For the series *Metallurgy*, Cha associates industrial forms made into new objects, covered with a layer of paper, and mimicry with Berlin's Teufelsberg, whose shell conceals a subsoil of industrial waste and rubble. This series of works is paired with *Wood/Number of the World* consisting of a nine-part cement structure and a metaphor for the artist's role as mediator in our world. Here, Cha merges the image of a tree from Nordic mythology, which connects the "nine worlds" progressing from the underworld to the upper world, with the Indonesian creation legend of the Hainuwele, in which human body parts become fertile plants.

On the first floor we also encounter symbolic play with connection, the underground, and the artist's inner life. The paintings *Tango_rule of prime number* are mysteriously connected by means of a structure reminiscent of the bellows of a bandoneon musical instrument. In *Nine Hole Bridge*, as well, the choice of material becomes a chain of associations and is inspired by stories about Berlin beer cellars that were converted into bunkers by filling them with cement during the Second World War.

HYELIM CHA *1979 in Seoul, South Korea, lives and works in Seoul and Berlin. Important solo exhibitions have taken place in the Arts Council Korea Insa Art Space, Leeahn Gallery and Gallery Mark, Seoul. In addition, her work has been shown in numerous group exhibitions, including in the Märkisches Museum, Berlin, AIAV, Japan, SOMA Kunstmuseum, Hangaram Art Museum, Total Museum of Contemporary Art, Ilmin Kunstmuseum, and Amorepacific Museum of Art.

She is currently receiving a twelve-month grant from the **Arts Council Korea** in the context of our International Studio Programme. | <https://hyelimcha.wordpress.com/>

GÜLSIN KETENCI

Starting from a decidedly feminist perspective, the Turkish photographer and video filmmaker Gülsin Ketenci develops her own special approaches to the subject matter in all stages of her production process. The main intention of her photographic narratives is to focus on the impact of women in all areas of society and to create public awareness of their work and commitment.

In earlier photo projects, Ketenci dealt with topics such as paid work in the household or women as politicians—areas which, in a society that is still oriented on criteria established largely by men, are still being ascribed "female" or "male" gender to the present day. Ketenci is currently working on a long-term project about Turkish sportswomen active in disciplines such as football, boxing or martial arts—sports that are generally defined by strength, physical contact and a certain aggressiveness, characteristics that are traditionally attributed to the "masculine".

Often, the women active in these fields are discriminated against as "unfeminine" and marginalized by a refusal to publicize their activities and by confronting the sportswomen with the disinterest of the media as a whole.

Ketenci's exhibition at Künstlerhaus Bethanien shows her latest photos, most of them taken in Berlin, depicting young sportswomen whom she had the opportunity to get to know personally and to accompany in various

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situations around their everyday sporting life: these are photographs, always sensitive and close to the subjects, which often show private moments such as exhaustion, depression, triumph, or the team's joint preparation behind the scenes for a match.

In the exhibition space, Ketenci arranges the photographs in the form of "stories", each comprising five to eight large-format prints, and each story dedicated to one discipline: football, bodybuilding, boxing, basketball.

In the context of this current photographic project, which she will continue in Istanbul after her return, Ketenci aims to create public visibility for these women athletes and to show their talent, their efforts and their professional skills, which are in no way inferior to those of men.

GÜLSIN KETENCI *1975, lives and works in Istanbul, Turkey. After studying mathematical engineering at Istanbul Technical University, she began working as a photographer in 2004. Besides her own photo and video projects, Ketenci has been a member of the photo agency NarPhotos in Istanbul since 2006 and works as an assistant director and still photographer for documentary film productions. | www.narphotos.net

She is currently a guest at Künstlerhaus Bethanien in the context of our International Studio Programme, receiving a six-month grant from **Be Mobile Create Together!** This project is co-funded by the European Union and the Republic of Turkey. | www.bemobilecreatetogether.eu

EMI OTAGURO

Emi Otaguro sees similarities between the shape of a sleeping cat and the geographical outline of a *mesa*, a flat-top mountain, which is also the title of her exhibition.

In her first solo show in Germany the artist is presenting drawings on paper napkins, relief-like paintings made out of chewing gum, and photographs of momentary encounters between stray cats' fur and her chewing gum works. She focuses on the essence of the human being and the collective unconscious, especially the archetype as found in the writings of Carl G. Jung. This archetype exists universally in each individual's psyche, and it works as the basic structural element for patterns of thought, imagination, action, etc. In her search for the core of our being, the artist observes people's aimless quotidian gestures.

For her series *sun bath*, the shapes of sun bathers – both dogs and human beings – are created with chewing gum. When placing these pieces on cats' backs, Otaguro sees cats' fur as a channel whereby two environments meet, the inside and the outside. With *napkins*, she concentrates on another in-between. Her ideas for the work came from miscellaneous short, empty moments in her daily life in Berlin, such as waiting for her tea in cafés. In ephemeral drawings, she celebrates the state of being lost in thought and unconsciously playing with paper napkins. A recurring subject of her drawings are dogs. Otaguro is interested in both positive and negative relationships between humans and companion animals.

In the video *covers*, she captures canine sensitivity through their changing facial expressions. Additionally, several wooden sticks that were once owned and cherished by dogs at the park are displayed in the gallery as proofs of their preferences and as found-objects.

EMI OTAGURO *1980 in Fukuoka, Japan, lives and works in Berlin and Aichi, Japan. She was a recipient of the grand prize of the Allotment Travel Award 2016, and the grand prize of Art Award Tokyo Marunouchi 2008. She received a Master of Arts from Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music (Tokyo University of the Arts). Otaguro's solo exhibitions so far were held at Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery and KAYOKOYUKI, Tokyo, Japan. Currently, she is receiving a twelve-month scholarship as part of the International Studio Programme, hosted by the **Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan (Bunkacho)**. |

<https://www.emiotaguro.com/>

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ANNA RÚN TRYGGVADÓTTIR

In her space-consuming installations and interventions, artist Anna Rún Tryggvadóttir addresses the friction between the natural and the man-made. She questions the possibility of alternative narratives to the prevailing Western notion of human beings governing the natural world. Her works are haptic and textural, inspired by natural operative systems and our relationship with natural formations. For her work, she creates situations in which technologically driven systems enable and explore the kinetic and cyclical behavior of natural elements. Chosen materials are set in perpetual motion or brought into a collaborative gesture with one another. The solo exhibition *An Ode - poriferal phases* at Künstlerhaus Bethanien gives a broad insight into Tryggvadóttir's process-based approach for the first time in Germany. With her work *Garden*, 2017, she constructed a terrain/topography of transformation processes that brought the individual behavior of its materials, beyond human control, to the fore, allowing space for the materials themselves, for an undefined and vulnerable performance. Under the title *An Ode - poriferal phases*, a series of objects consisting of natural and artificial materials is presented as a performative (presence of a) spectrum from lifeless to perished life forms. Whether rocks, found wooden structures or man-made fusions between foam and natural sponges – each element is set in motion mechanically and is activated in a slowed-down counterclockwise rotation. In contrast to linear movements and time concepts, the rotation involves the past and the future, but insists on the perception of the here and now as a perpetuum. Each of her works questions the politics and agendas of the materials used, by playing with their properties and exploring intersections between the naturally and humanly constructed as a metaphor for the components of our lives.

ANNA RÚN TRYGGVADÓTTIR *1980 in Reykjavík, Iceland, lives and works in Berlin. She graduated with a BA degree in visual arts from Iceland Academy of the Arts in 2004 and received an MA degree in visual arts from Concordia University in Montréal, Canada in 2014. Tryggvadóttir has held solo exhibitions in Canada and in Iceland, amongst others at Reykjavik Art Museum, ASÍ Art Museum Reykjavik, THE MAI: Montreal Arts Intercultural, and has participated in numerous group exhibitions in Iceland, Canada and Germany. She is currently a twelve-month **Icelandic Visual Arts Funds** scholarship holder and participating in our International Studio Programme. | www.annaruntryggvadottir.com