



From top, clockwise:  
**Mathis Gasser**  
 Inhabitants (Spaceships)  
 (detail, 2017)  
 Courtesy of the Artist  
 and Chewday's, London

**Richard Serra**  
 "Drawings 2015–2017"  
 Installation view at  
 Museum Boijmans  
 Van Beuningen,  
 Rotterdam (2017)  
 Courtesy of the Artist and  
 Museum Boijmans Van  
 Beuningen, Rotterdam  
 Photography by  
 Aad Hoogendoorn

**Win McCarthy**  
 Mister (2017)  
 Courtesy of the Artist and  
 Silberkuppe, Berlin  
 Photography by  
 Timo Ohler



# Mathis Gasser

Chewday's / London

I visited Mathis Gasser's solo show "The Dark Forest" on a very hot day. Upon entering, I thought about J.G. Ballard's *The Drowned World* (1962), a novel set in a postapocalyptic London beset by tropical temperatures and floods, where humans struggle to psychologically adapt to sudden climate change.

Taking its title from the second book in Cixin Liu's "Three-Body Problem" science-fiction trilogy, which depicts the universe as a "dark forest" where countless discrete civilizations exist in peace as long as they remain ignorant of each other, Gasser's exhibition is composed of only two works: a painting and a sculpture, theatrically placed one in front of the other.

The meticulously painted *Inhabitants (Spaceships)* (2017) provides a dark, informative backdrop, an outer space to look toward, expanding horizons with speculative ambitions. Taking as its source a "starship size comparison chart" found on deviantart.com, the painting illustrates several hundred spaceships from the history of the science-fiction genre.

Positioned directly on the floor, a couple of meters in front of the painting, a white-plaster sculpture, *Inhabitants* (2017), depicts a group of women dressed in robes and sandals who hold hands while gazing at the sky. The artist found the stone slab — a common decorative feature of postwar community centers in the UK — abandoned near his studio, and later collaged into its base a reproduction of a British Imperialist ship. Merged together, these found and appropriated elements invest the sculpture with a kind of solemnity, in balance between a dystopic future and a colonial past.

The two works create a gravitational tension suggesting that deliverance, as Samuel Luterbacher writes in the exhibition's accompanying text, may be possible through a vessel that is "not a repository of one imagination, but many." We are left contemplating voyages of discovery and, at the same time, tools for escaping extinction.

by Attilia Fattori Franchini

# Richard Serra

Museum Boijmans / Rotterdam

The exhibition "Richard Serra: Drawings 2015–2017" at Museum Boijmans presents a large corpus of works on paper that reveals the extent of Serra's research on space in relation to the art object. In "Sculpture in the Expanded Field" (*October* vol. 8, Spring 1979) Rosalind Krauss included Serra among the first artists to explore the possibilities of architecture and "not architecture," and reflected on the fact that "in every case of these *axiomatic structures*, there is some kind of intervention into the real space of architecture, sometimes through partial reconstruction, sometimes through drawing." The latter constitutes Serra's first experimental medium as well as an independent practice, nonderivative nor preparatory of sculpture. It is enlightening to note that between 1965 and 1966, during a trip to Florence, Serra investigated the role that drawing played in the emergence of volumes in Renaissance painting; additionally, he studied taxidermy. Such preoccupations with drawn space and "nonartistic" materials during those years have been crucial to his later contributions to Minimalism.

At the Boijmans, Serra continues his practice of transferring an "environmental" dimension to drawing, starting from the very exhibition space, which he altered through interventions in the walls, establishing new geometric relationships between the space's elements. The drawings expose the materiality of the paper, filamentous and without neat margins; the roughness of the support enhances the signs and the traces that emerge from the use of paintstick combined with etching ink, silica and litho crayon. Serra throws all his "blacks" onto the working desk and then transfers the colors onto the paper by pressing it against them. This gesture, applied from the back of the sheet, abolishes any possibility for a neat composition. If small-format drawings such as *Ramble 3-54* (2015) have a quasi-serigraphic aspect, in the *Rift* series (2011–17) those shapes appear brutal, to the point that the sludge of color echoes the anti-monumentality of the artist's sculptures.

by Eleonora Milani

# Win McCarthy

Silberkuppe / Berlin

A printed A4 by the entrance to Silberkuppe, unobtrusively placed on a windowsill, has the appearance of a simple list of works for Win McCarthy's exhibition, "Mister." Beneath the injunction "FOR ASSEMBLY" appears an outline with numbers and subheadings:

1. Staging area  
Liebherr LTM 1500.8.1, 1:50 scale  
(w/manual and additional parts)

The schematic takes on more evocative dimensions as it continues: "3. Mr. Reticence," "6. Mini-me," "9. 'Headless'." Sometimes a list of works is not just a list of works. Over the course of the two rooms of "Mister," an aesthetic unity that enfolds concordance into scripture emerges. The notion of structuring or "assembling" seems a critical undercurrent in a show in which sprawling, miniaturized structures, toy cranes and other signifiers of construction and object-making appear and reappear like leitmotifs.

The wall works in the exhibition have a similar fragility to the language of the list, but they resist any easy conflation of the concepts of fragility and delicacy. Integrating roughly cut-out photographs with text and found objects, the pieces have something of the quality of an anally expulsive Joseph Cornell thinking "outside the box." Temporality appears to be a theme of "Mister." Sometimes it is subtly expressed, sometimes explicitly, as in a work that uses a calendar as a support. The photographs have an air of requiem: the celebration of bodies and structures moving through and out of time, never the same, but shot through with an iconicity that engraves them in the mind.

This embrace of instantaneity is also present in the facial casts on display. Distorted, sometimes materially and sometimes through their positioning and estrangement from the bodies to which they are presumably attached, these casts reify the entropy inscribed in time itself. This sense of encroaching disorder, internally or externally imposed, is especially poignant in light of the fact that McCarthy's show is to be Silberkuppe's last. Fragility haunts the world both inside and outside the frame.

by William Kherbek