

# Belgium

## FAMILY TREES

Contemporary fine art photographer Leigh Ledare, who lives and works in New York, first made a name for himself with his shockingly provocative “Pretend you’re Actually Alive” project, a brutal, avert-your-eyes series that explored his ambiguous and highly erotic relationship with his ageing mother, a stripper, over a period of eight years. Ledare opts for a mix of photography, archive material and text in his mission to uncover human relationships, social taboos, and life’s great themes of identity, love and loss – and he doesn’t beat around the bush. This exhibition features over 100 pieces of Ledare’s oeuvre, with works from all his photographic series to date including “Double Bind” which showcases the artist’s ex-wife, photographed not only by himself but also by her new husband. Given the prominent role others play in his work, Ledare has called the show “Leigh Ledare et al.”: Fascinating and highly personal stuff that sometimes borders on the disturbing.

### Leigh Ledare et al.

From 8<sup>th</sup> September to 25<sup>th</sup> November

Wiels, Brussels

[wiels.org](http://wiels.org)



© All images courtesy of the artist



## DARK ROMANCE

Young Swiss star-in-the-making Léopold Rabus has brought his latest collection of paintings and installations to Brussels’ Aeroplastics gallery. “From a true story” is a haunting domain full of weird, otherworldly creatures set to the recurring backdrop of Rabus’ own natural habitat, the Northwestern Swiss landscape with its woodlands, wood huts and vast forests. Sense of humour intact, the artist takes on themes like origin and destiny, loss, the past, and our concept of reality while evoking black romanticism in an oeuvre that brings to mind Jonathan Meese or Paul McCarthy. Apart from this solo show, there’s also a group exhibition on the bill curated by none other than Rabus himself, and which includes pieces by Sébastien Verdon, Pierre Gattoni and Denis Schneider.

### Léopold Rabus & guests

Until 27<sup>th</sup> October

Aeroplastics, Brussels

[aeroplastics.net](http://aeroplastics.net)



© Courtesy of Aeroplastics contemporary, Brussels

## LONDON CALLING

Italian-born Gilbert Proesch and Brit George Passmore met at a London art school in 1967 and have been joined at the hip ever since. As the duo Gilbert & George, they can almost always be found in public wearing matching suits, two eccentric living sculptures that periodically pop up in their own work. With art that's at times provocative, the pair take a poke at society and taboos as well as "the issues", like religion, violence, death, sex, hope, fear, racial tension and patriotism: "Our subject matter is the world... we are interested in the human person, the complexity of life." Having lived and worked in London's East End for about 40 years now, they consider their microcosmic neighbourhood a backdrop for their work; an urban landscape that operates as the basis not only for a city portrait but also a petri dish of life itself.

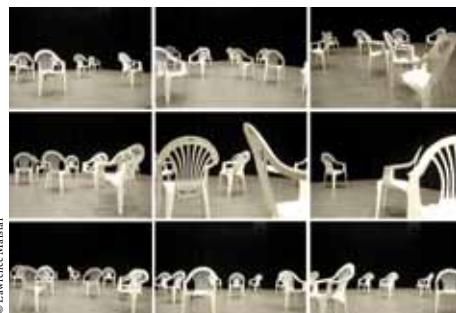
Gilbert & George: London Pictures  
Until 6<sup>th</sup> October  
Baronian Francey, Brussels  
[baronianfrancey.com](http://baronianfrancey.com)



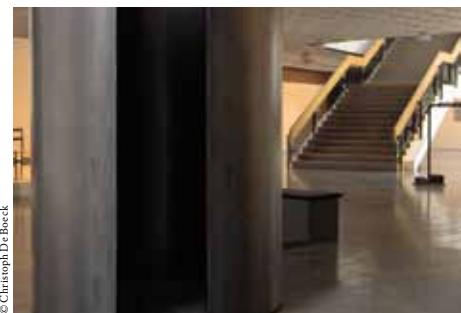
© Gilbert & George, 2012



© Lawrence Malstaf



© Lawrence Malstaf



© Christoph De Boeck

## SEEING SOUNDS

This group exhibition features three innovative Belgian artists who all have a thing for multimedia art. Lawrence Malstaf, who once hung himself dangerously between two plastic sheets with only a tube for oxygen, operates somewhere on the border between visual art, performance art and theatre. His fellow countrymen Christoph De Boeck and Aernoudt Jacobs, on the other hand, are into sound, treating it as a visual and tactile medium by separating it from its original context. In an attempt to give sonic energy a tangible presence, whether in the form of vibration or by trying to detach it from its source, the artists wonder aloud whether sound can be experienced, how it relates to its environment and how human beings are affected by it. A selection of challenging, highly intellectual and very modern works that incorporate the newest of newfangled technological developments.

Lawrence Malstaf - Christoph De Boeck - Aernoudt Jacobs  
From 14<sup>th</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> October  
Fortlaan 17, Ghent  
[fortlaan17.com](http://fortlaan17.com)

## BODY LANGUAGE

Throughout his artistic career, Japanese artist Kazuogo Shiraga has chosen to ignore the principles of painting and pictorial composition to the extent that at one point he even abandoned the brush altogether. Having joined the Japanese avant-garde movement "Gutai" – which demanded painting suffused with action and performance as well as true artistic originality – Shiraga began to paint with his bare hands and feet. He developed a method that would later become his trademark: painting with his feet while hanging from the ceiling attached to a rope. The goal, apparently, was to eliminate all consciousness and deliberate composition from his work and to "overcome the duality between body and soul", between the unconscious power of the body and the conscious power of the mind. This tension, the so-called concept of shishitsu, is central to Shiraga's work. A fascinating look at one of Japan's most revolutionary artists.

**Kazuogo Shiraga**  
Until 20<sup>th</sup> October  
Axel Vervoordt Gallery, Antwerp  
[axelvervoordtgallery.com](http://axelvervoordtgallery.com)



© All images courtesy of Axel Vervoordt Gallery



© Kumi Ogura

## STAGED MYSTERIES

Kumi Ogura is a Japanese artist who has spent much of her recent past in Antwerp. Her dreamy and atmospheric photographs are mainly inspired by the language of cinema, and attempt to establish tension between the genres. She makes historical, theoretical and visual parallels between photography and moving pictures while evoking cinematic genres like horror and thriller. All this is achieved by staging locations and people, theatrical play and deliberately placed effects. Her sober images are almost invariably inhabited by beautiful but faceless mystery women in unusual poses, set in bizarre, sombre and even bloody surroundings and hint at a before and after that's never quite revealed. Ogura's first book, "Noise" has recently been published by Caillou Bleu.

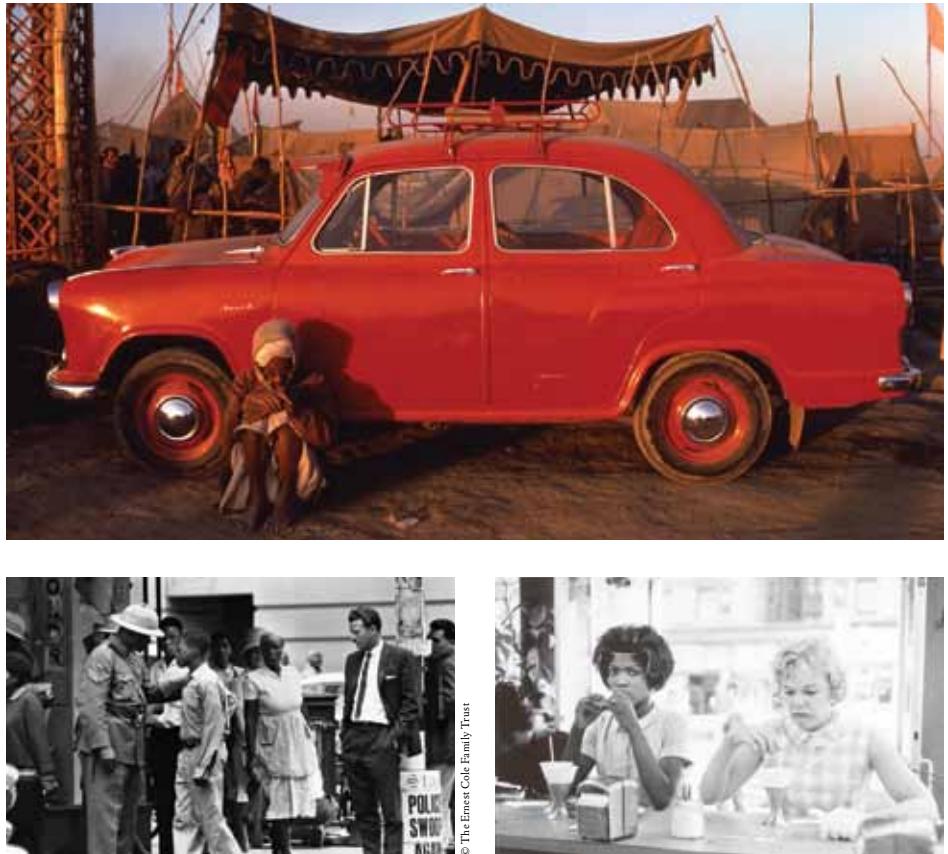
**Kumi Ogura**  
From 8<sup>th</sup> September until 14<sup>th</sup> October  
Stieglitz 19, Antwerp  
[stieglitz19.be](http://stieglitz19.be)

# United Kingdom

## THE GOLDEN YEARS

The Cold War, the Cultural Revolution, America's Vietnam misadventure, the civil rights movement... the 60s and 70s were turbulent times when the world changed and, along with it, photography. This exhibition celebrates this so-called golden age of photography, when the medium finally began to be recognised as an art form. Up to 400 powerful images from all over the world tell the various stories of two memorable decades. While South African photographer Ernest Cole was busy documenting the ugly face of apartheid, Li Zhensheng from China took to portraying his country through the prism of the Cultural Revolution. Both risked their lives in the process. While Boris Mikhailov was capturing the Soviet occupation in the Ukraine on film, American artist Bruce Davidson was telling the story of the civil rights struggle in the U.S. Also on show are a number of creations by the godfather of Japanese photography Shomei Tomatsu, as well as David Goldblatt, William Eggleston and many other key figures.

**Everything Was Moving**  
From 13<sup>th</sup> September to 13<sup>th</sup> January  
Barbican, London  
[barbican.org](http://barbican.org)

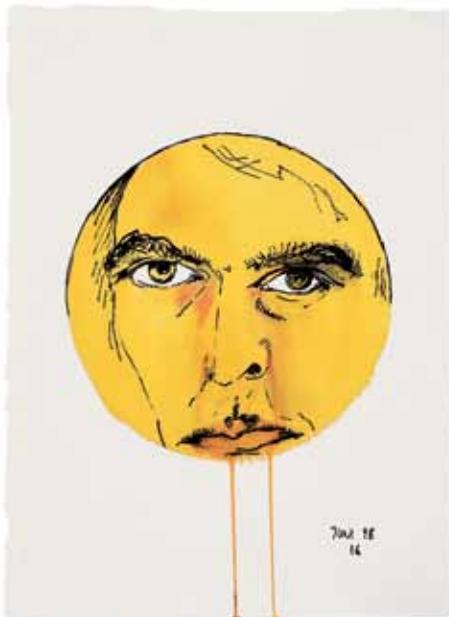


© 2012 Succession Naguib Singh

© Bruce Davidson



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## FACE TO FACE

Düsseldorf-based German artist Thomas Schütte is one of the most important contemporary art figures of his generation with works in the collections of renowned addresses like London's Tate or New York's MoMA. The winner of the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale in 2005, his multidisciplinary art sees him dabble in everything from architectural installations to watercolours, sculptures, prints, drawings, banners, etchings and photographs. Working with a range of different materials including clay, plasticine and wood, Schütte's sculptures tend to depict things like giant cherries and miniature castles, though this show at the Serpentine Gallery focuses, for the first time, on a different aspect of his work. A collection of portraits of himself, friends and acquaintances in the guise of paintings, photos and sculptures that, as with much of his work, question the accepted traditions of art and reflect upon the human condition.

**Thomas Schütte**  
From 25<sup>th</sup> September to 18<sup>th</sup> November  
Serpentine Gallery, London  
[serpentinegallery.org](http://serpentinegallery.org)

# DESIGN PRIME TIME



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## MEXICAN CHRONICLES

Manuel Álvarez Bravo is without doubt one of Mexico's major artists and one of the most significant Latin American photographers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A pioneer of his generation and a great chronicler, Bravo has captured eight decades of Mexican life on film, beginning with the period following the Mexican revolution and the so-called Mexican Renaissance, a major cultural contribution to a country's collective memory. This exhibition, which displays a selection of about 150 images, takes a fresh look at Bravo's vast oeuvre and its iconographic themes like minimalism, geometrical harmony, the ambiguity of objects, as well as the spectre of human beings reduced to anonymous masses. Though Bravo's motifs are rather ordinary, ranging from folk art and local rituals to everyday life and the urban landscape of Mexico City, the artist always makes sure to add a heady dose of either irony or surrealism, turning his images into strange, eccentric and fascinating representations of the surrealist avant-garde.

**Manuel Álvarez Bravo**  
 From 16<sup>th</sup> October to 20<sup>th</sup> January  
 Jeu de Paume, Paris  
[jeudepaume.org](http://jeudepaume.org)



© All images Archivo Manuel Álvarez Bravo



## TRIPS DOWN MEMORY LANE

Does anyone remember the last time they flipped through the pages of a photo album? In a time of digital storage and the proliferation of online platforms like Flickr or Facebook, the paper album, which for the longest time was the be all and end all of family memories, has become a relic of a bygone era. Reason enough for Erik Kessels, collector of vernacular photography, editor, curator and founder of a communications agency to dedicate a whole exhibition to the visual anthropology of the photo album, a tradition that is slowly but surely dying out. "Album Beauty" showcases hundreds of amateur photo albums, many of which Kessels found during countless browsing sessions at antique markets and junk shops. They all tell the same stories of birth, death, love, happiness, youth, ageing and friendship in their own achingly human way, while at the same time documenting the story of analogue photography. A declaration of love to a vanishing medium.

**Erik Kessels: Album Beauty**  
 Until 14<sup>th</sup> October  
 Foam, Amsterdam  
[foam.nl](http://foam.nl)