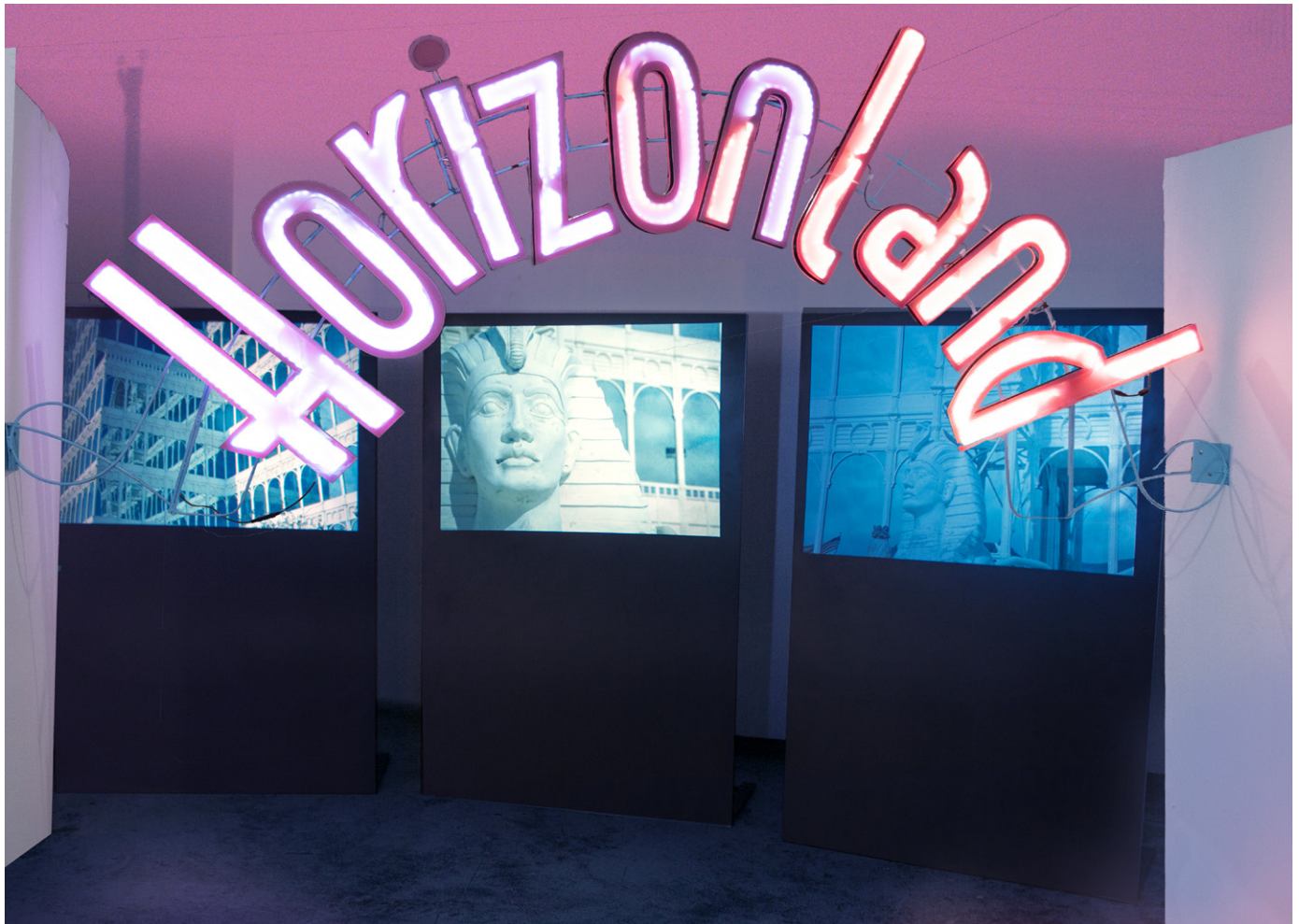


ROSA NUSSBAUM

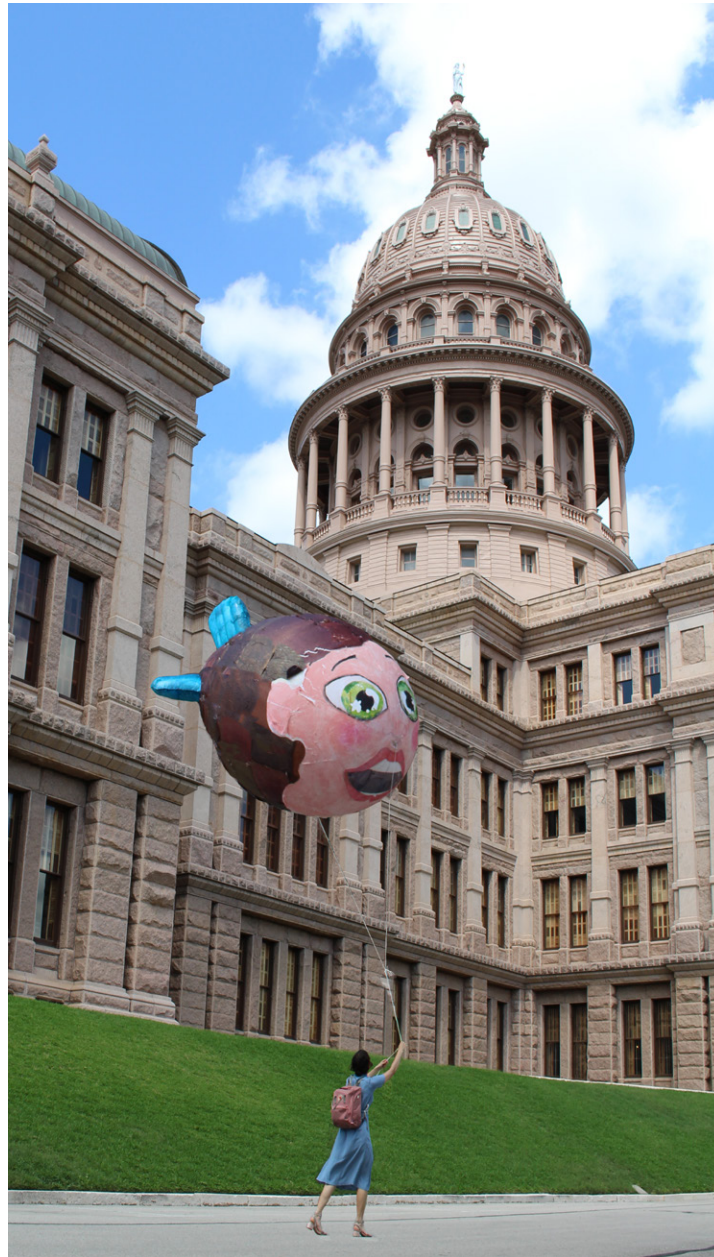
HORIZONLAND



WOMEN & THEIR WORK

APRIL 27 - JUNE 6, 2019

AUSTIN, TEXAS



Above: *WOW (that's amazing)*, 2016-2019, tissue paper, helium, pvc, cassette tape, 6' x 10' x 7'
 (Documentation of performance on May 4, 2019 at Texas State Capitol)

Cover Panel: *Untitled Sign (Horizonland)*, 2019, Welded steel, plexi, led light strips, mdf latex paint, 4' x 9' x 8" and *Horizonland*, 2016-2019,
 Slide projectors, 35mm slides, audio, linear actuator, raspberry pi, speakers, painted mdf and welded steel screens, dimensions variable

HORIZONLAND

When you first enter a space, you are met with a system of bodily negotiations directed by its design. Rosa Nussbaum's *Horizonland* plays out on a series of surfaces that move the viewer through a seemingly autobiographical metanarrative set in an amusement park. The various interactive installations stand in for and expand the body across the gallery space by combining material and media with equity and care. *Every amusement park has a map: this is a map.*

In the introduction to *The Left Hand of Darkness*—a story that follows an ethnologist sent from Known Worlds to analyze the social systems of another—Ursula K. Le Guin explains that science fiction is a description of the now, told through a lie of the future. She writes, “[I] am an artist too, and therefore a liar... The only truth I can understand or express is, logically defined, a lie. Psychologically defined, a symbol. Aesthetically defined, a metaphor.”[1]

Nussbaum's work articulates and rearticulates a version of her own image and experience in competing forms of the mundane and incredible as she is asked to assimilate from one culture to another. *An alien ethnologist from the known to the unknown.* And, this alien is transmitting a report, part experiential data and part what you'd expect from her body in-context: a political site and spectacle.

The alien finds herself asked to observe with astonishment the monuments of her future. By definition, a metanarrative reveals its own artificiality. Everyday objects are reworked into exaggerated forms throughout the exhibition. *WOW! that's amazing (2016)* is a large promotional blimp re-fabricated to resemble the artist's face. It acts as a vehicle for an audio piece that repeats sentiments of amazement. The work is

camp: the façade cartoonish, the voice high-pitched. The imposing monument laboring for the alien resembles the monuments of her new environment. A proxy, it stands in for multiple bodies. But the body fails. The blimp slowly deflates by the end of each exhibition day.

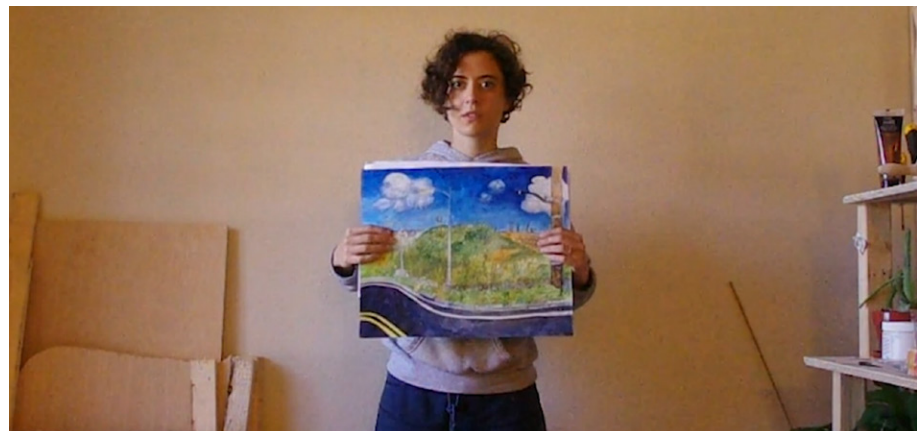
The artworks announce themselves in a repetitive and intertextual manner, pointing to the current political notion that the more a narrative is asserted, the more authenticity it is afforded. *The alien learns that one must identify oneself.* As the viewer progresses through the space, they pass under a bright pink, glowing threshold assigning itself: *Horizonland.* The font is that of Disneyland's Tomorrowland, a future of plastics—a superlative material of the fake—envisioned and presented by Monsanto. That place of simulation forms a perfect stand-in for America itself.

This exhibition was inspired by repeated, scheduled trips the artist took to Dallas over the course of a year, a mark of which is seen in another work that lampoons American monuments and their artifice. *The Natural Bridge (2019)* is a wall tapestry depicting a Dallas underpass, amidst frozen chickens and traffic cones, illusorily

held up by phallic monuments ranging from ejaculating and erect to flaccid. *The hybrid-alien sees this traditional body-politic asserting itself over and over.*

The city of Dallas, Texas is Anywhere, USA, a space where anyone identified as *alien* is subjugated to interrogation. During the opening reception, dressed as a hybrid car creature—alien—Nussbaum performed *Car (2019)*, a satirically over-acted piece where she is stopped by a police officer (performed by p1nkstar) demanding her identification. *The alien's body is poked and prodded as she struggles to validate herself.* The authority—normative—figure enacts body invasion. Contradiction is thematic. Here, private and public space converge: the car and the highway.

Much of the work in *Horizonland* integrates sculpture and media, forming a hybridized body. Perhaps as a general portrayal of intercorporeal existence; and, perhaps as a proposal for her future. In “The Cyborg Manifesto” Donna Haraway wrote, “I prefer a network ideological image, suggesting the profusion of spaces and identities and the permeability of boundaries in the personal body and in the body politic. ‘Networking’ is both a feminist practice and a multinational corporate strategy—weaving is for



Actions for an O Visa, 2019, (video still), video, 2m 14s



Agent Wonder (and the days of arbitration), 2017, steel, wood, paint, gum, raspberry pi, bluetooth speaker. Text and video developed in collaboration with cell phone model: Moto E XT1527 35333063832396, 5'9" x 2'5" x 3'3"

oppositional cyborgs.”[2] She asserts that the boundary between science fiction and social reality doesn’t exist. *At the amusement park, the alien waits in lines.* The artist articulates the ‘foreign’ body across space with poetic texts of beingness for a body once rendered alien. Once rendered paperwork. An excerpt from *Agent Wonder (2017)*: *I FedEx-ed myself, crawled into an envelope, I was not a biohazard.* The alien must identify her body again. Must become object. Must rearticulate her experience over and over. The placeless is unsanctioned and therefore a threat. *Horizonland* is as much a critique of how

our culture negotiates certain bodies throughout space as it is a twist on the feminist strategy of self-authorship.

The alien is storytelling...out of necessity. *Horizonland (2019)* for which the exhibition is titled consists of 35mm slides projected onto three screens, automated and synced to poetic text. These photographs depict a near-dystopian landscape of everyday Dallas, vacillating between vast landscapes of nature and commerce, and the more discreet. The sound of the slides changing accompanied by the poetic cadence of the voiceover form a dissociative nostalgia. The text performs. A humorous excerpt: *the monolithic dome institute, where pants are optional.* The text expands time. A solemn excerpt: *I wonder for four magic hours at magic hour. Nothing was connected.*

Sentiments repeat and contradict in a nonlinear storytelling of the alien’s trip from “base” and “camp”; from “mercury” and “mother”; from the security of a space of “connection” into this new space where “nothing was connected.” The explorer is met with distrust. And, to tell a story is to be subject to evaluation. To lack agency. Here, is where Nussbaum complicates our historical knowledge of feminist theory with a contemporary implication of situated knowledges. The act of self-authorship as catalyst for agency is one of privilege. The alien must recount her story to gain credibility; to become. The human is the viewer; the one who watches the spectacle. Spectatorship is the ultimate agency of the amusement park. *And, the nonhuman alien must prove her worth.*

As much as *Horizonland (2019)* presents a facsimile of home movies of the past, something exhibited in private, *Actions for an O Visa (2019)* presents a facsimile of YouTube instructional videos, made for public consumption. With this video work, Nussbaum satirically demonstrates satisfaction of the US government’s requirements to obtain a work visa for, “... an alien who possesses extraordinary ability.” Nussbaum looks straight into the camera, identifies herself as an alien and demonstrates absurdly mundane abilities and tasks to set up an unexpected, comedic end: *the alien burns a hole through your (fourth) wall with her laser eyes.*

These works weave together narratives of immigration and alienation through visual and textual repetition, akin to performative utterances reified in their rearticulation. An action conditioned through the interview process of citizenship. Fictionalized and sensationalized as you would expect an act of storytelling, to call into question whom is afforded authenticity, authorship, and personhood. For all its humor, Nussbaum’s *Horizonland* is fundamentally about care: the contrasting presence and absence of modalities of care by governing bodies. When you first enter a space, you are met with a system of bodily negotiations directed by its design. *The alien sees a simulation machine that negotiates the body for capital and consumption, not care for its constituents.*

Kevin Brophy is an artist, writer and educator currently based in Pittsburgh, PA.

[1] Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Left Hand of Darkness*. Ace Books, New York, NY. 2010. p. xvii.

[2] Haraway, Donna. “The Cyborg Manifesto...” in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. Routledge, New York, NY. 1991. p. 159.

Rosa Nussbaum

EDUCATION

- 2018 Master of Fine Arts, Studio Art, Transmedia, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX
- 2014 BFA Fine Art Print and Time Based Media, Wimbledon College of Arts, London, UK
- 2011 Foundation Art and Design, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2019 *Horizonland*, Women & Their Work, Austin, TX
- 2018 *Luminaria 2018*, Performance Sculpture in collaboration with architecture team, San Antonio, TX
Glasgow International, platform Easterhouse, Glasgow, Scotland
- 2016 *Rosa—>Kanye on the Jeremy Kyle Show*, hosted by Kat Buchanan and Aidan Strudwick at 12ø Collective, Stoke Newington, London, UK
- 2015 *Rosa -> Kanye*, Experimentica 15 Festival, Cardiff, Wales

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS + PERFORMANCES

- 2019 *Soco Residency Exhibition*, Elsewhere Museum, Greensboro, NC
- 2018 *Affordable Dream House*, Visual Arts Center, Austin, TX
- 2017 *Worldhack Installed*, Babycastles Gallery, New York, NY
A Room Before, Visual Arts Center, Austin, TX
- 2016 *Partial Shade*, Partial Shade platform, Austin, TX
THE SHIFT, Flat Time House, London, UK
LEM Performance Festival, Light Eye Mind, London, UK
30 Days/30 Works, 12ø collective, stcfthots gallery, online exhibition
Trading Places, 12ø collective, Stoke Newington, London, UK
Treat Yo Self, exhibition/event put on by It's Tropical collective, Bloc Projects, Sheffield, UK
So What, performance night at the Chalk Farm Mini Market, London, UK
Green, curated by Cheap Drinks collective at the Chalk Farm Mini Market, London, UK
- 2015 *Art@CMS*, Fermilab Art Gallery, Batavia, IL
Demimonde with Slate Projects and Mottahedan Projects at Amberwood House, London, UK

Once More with Feeling(s), curated by Chris Alton at Lewisham Art House, London, UK

Farm Open Day and Performance Night, curated by Rosa Faber at Hayward Heath Organic Farm, Hayward Heath, UK

Treat Yo Self, curated by It's Tropical collective at Bloc Projects Sheffield, UK

- 2014 BN Reloaded as part of SYFU collective curated by Barby Asante at Iniva, London, UK

Pre Show // Degree Show, Arts Admin's Toynbee Studios, London, UK

Crack In the Road Live #3, The Bussey Building, London UK

CERN residency exhibition, Shoreditch Trust, London, UK

Hype, Chelsea College of Art and Design, London, UK

Brouhaha, Changing Spaces, Cambridge, UK

SELECTED RESIDENCIES/AWARDS

- 2019 RAIR Philly, Philadelphia, PA
Elsewhere Museum Residency, Greensboro, NC
- 2018 Travel Award, College of Fine Arts, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX
Continuing Fellowship, Graduate School, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX
- 2017 Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT
- 2016 College of Fine Arts Student Excellence Scholarship, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX
- 2015 Whittingdale Residency with Cargo Collective, London, UK
- 2014 Residency at InIVA with SYFU Collective Wandle Studio Prize, Wimbledon College of Arts, London, UK
MFI Graduate Award, Flat Time House, London, UK
Art@CMS residency at CERN with UAL and the Shoreditch Trust, London, UK

COMMISSIONS

- 2018 Commission by Love Unlimited for Glasgow International, Glasgow, Scotland
Featured Artist Commission for Luminaria 2018, San Antonio, TX
- 2015 *Merton Mega*, Public Art Commission for Merton Council, London, UK
Experimentica 15, Performance Commission, Cardiff, Wales



The Natural Bridge, 2019, woven cotton and synthetic fiber tapestry, 4' x 16'



Composite performance image depicting multiple views of *Car (artist talk)*, 2019, with Rosa Nussbaum and p1nkstar, upholstery foam, fabric, wire, furby, tissue paper, rubber, batting, dimensions variable

Women & Their Work

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Known for its pioneering spirit, embrace of artistic innovation, and commitment to Texas audiences and artists, Women & Their Work is now celebrating its 41st anniversary. Presenting over 50 events a year in visual art, dance, theater, music, and film, the gallery features on-going exhibitions of Texas women artists and brings artists of national stature to Texas audiences. Since its founding, Women & Their Work has presented over 1,900 artists in 321 visual art exhibitions, 152 music, dance and theater events, 16 film festivals, 30 literary readings and spoken word performances, and 682 workshops in programming that reflects the broad diversity of this region. Nationally recognized, Women & Their Work has been featured in *Art in America*, *The New York Times*, *ArtForum*, and on National Public Radio and was the first organization in Texas to receive a grant in visual art from the

National Endowment for the Arts. Women & Their Work reaches over 850 school children and teachers each year through gallery tours, gallery talks with exhibiting artists, participatory workshops, in-school performances, dance master classes, and teacher workshops.



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