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u is a letter from the word “current” on the 67 Steps website. u has recently exhibited at Carl Louie with Naoki Sutter-Shudo, and has an upcoming show with Alan Belcher at The Lily. In 2019 u will open a new gallery in Calgary called “u’s”.

Alix Ferrand

Alix Ferrand is an interdisciplinary artist from Montreal. She works in celebration of life and fun, connection and disconnection. She wonders how to tell if something is alive or not. She is currently completing her BFA in Studio Arts at Concordia University.

Anna-Lisa Hölger

Anna-Lisa Höglér (born 1990 in Vienna, Austria) lives and works in Cologne, Germany. She received a BFA studying with Christopher Muller and Gisela Bullacher at Folkwang UdK Essen. She is one of the founding members of the artist collective New Bretagne and the exhibition space Belle Air. Recent exhibitions include: Leckhaus and Friends, Gold und Beton, Cologne; Die Idee der besten schlechten Geschichte, 8.Salon Hamburg; Triple income two kids, Teichstraße, Cologne ; HarmonieMusik und Vogelschiessen/ Musique harmonique et tirs d’oiseaux, Shanaynay, Paris ; Was kost die Welt, Belle Air, Essen.

Benjamin Reiss

Benjamin Reiss (b. 1985, Los Angeles) lives and works in Los Angeles. His work has been recently shown in exhibitions at FLAX @ Tin Flats, Los Angeles; Bel Ami, Los Angeles (solo); Parker Gallery, Los Angeles; Actual Size, Los Angeles (duo); and 247365, New York. He received a BA from School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Brittany Sheperd

Brittany Shepherd is a Toronto-based artist whose interdisciplinary practice deals with perception, networks and notions of public and private space through video, photography and sculptural installation. She is also the founder and director of the exhibition platform The Table in Toronto.

Hanna Hur and Michael Kennedy Costa

Hanna Hur (b.1985, Toronto) lives and works in Los Angeles. She has exhibited at Motel, Brooklyn; L’INCONNUE, Montreal; Visitor Welcome Center, Los Angeles; 67 Steps, Los Angeles; The Sunroom, Richmond; Audain Gallery at SFU, Vancouver; Roberta Pelan, Toronto; Tomorrow, New York; and Shanaynay, Paris.

Michael Kennedy Costa (b. 1982, Northampton, MA) lives and works in Los Angeles. He has recently exhibited at Roger’s Office, Los Angeles; Sydney,

Sydney; 67 Steps, Los Angeles; Jonathan Hopson Gallery, Houston; Chapman University, Orange; No Space at Bikini Wax, Mexico City; and Chin's Push at Paramount Ranch, Los Angeles. He has given numerous readings of his poetry, including at Hauser & Wirth, Los Angeles; Chin's Push, Los Angeles; Central Park Gallery, Los Angeles; and Motel Gallery, Brooklyn. He is currently working on a book of poems with Holoholo Books in Paris.

Kim Farkas

Kim Farkas (b. 1988) lives and works in Paris, France. He has recently participated in exhibitions at venues including Commonwealth & Council (L.A.), Doc (Paris), Shanaynay (Paris), Le Confort Moderne (Poitiers) and others. Kim Farkas graduated from École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 2014. He has run Holoholo Books with Naoki Sutter-Shudo since 2012.

Lila de Magalhaes and Harley Hollenstein

Lila de Magalhaes (b.1986, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) lives and works in Los Angeles, California. Recent exhibitions have been held at Francois Ghebaly, Los Angeles; Company Gallery, New York; Mutt. R, Los Angeles; LTD, Los Angeles; Freedman Fitzpatrick, Los Angeles; Abode Gallery, Los Angeles (solo); UP STATE, Zurich; Freud museum, London; spf15, Miami; and New Bretagne Bel Air, Essen.

Harley Hollenstein (b.1993 Fribourg, Switzerland) received a BA in Interdisciplinary Sculpture from the Maryland Institute College of Art in 2015. He currently lives between Zurich and Los Angeles.

Naoki Sutter-Shudo

Naoki Sutter-Shudo (b.1990 in Paris, France) lives and works in Los Angeles, California. He has recently shown artworks at Crève-cœur, Paris (solo); Sydney, Sydney; Freedman Fitzpatrick, Los Angeles; Carl Louie, Ontario; Bodega, New York (solo); The Steakhouse Doskoi, Tokyo; Ashes/Ashes, Los Angeles; The Sunroom, Richmond, VA; Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco; Los Angeles Contemporary Archive, Los Angeles, CA; and Mortadelle, Arles, France. He is the co-founder of Holoholo, a publishing house based in Paris, and the exhibition space Bel Ami in Los Angeles.

Recent exhibitions organized by Ana Iwataki and Marion Vasseur Raluy include Luca Francesconi: Eternal Digestion, 67 Steps, Los Angeles; Windowlicker, Balice Hertling, Paris, France (co-curated with Julie Beaufrils); Beloved in the Landscape, New Bretagne/Belle Air, Essen, Germany; Nothing Recedes Like Failure, Mortadelle, Arles, France; and Some of My Best Friends Are Germs, Doc, Paris, France. I will set a stage for you, an anthology of their Art Viewer Screen program was published by Holoholo Books in April 2018.

project space 1

Naoki Sutter-Shudo and u
Duct tape and packing tape
2018

project space 2

Naoki Sutter-Shudo and u
Caviar beads and packing tape
2018

project space 3

Naoki Sutter-Shudo and u
Confetti and packing tape
2018

project space 4 (18-17)

Kim Farkas and u
Painted PVC, packing tape
2018

project space 5 (18-18)

Kim Farkas and u
Painted PVC, packing tape
2018

project space 6

Alix Ferrand and u
Synthetic pompoms from Dolla-
rama, Samaras (fruits) from the
ash tree in from of my house, dried
cedar cones, dried and ripped Gin-
ko leaves, other dried and ripped
leaves, packing tape
2018

project space 7

Benjamin Reiss and u
Polyethylene, styrene, epoxy, rub-
ber, packing tape
2018

project space 8

(*Phantom Limb & u*)
Brittany Shepherd and u
Inkjet print, packing tape
2018

project space 9

Hanna Hur, Michael Kennedy
Costa and u
Hand-cut and shaped copper, ink-
jet print on transparent film,
packing tape
2018

project space 10

Lila de Magalhaes, Harley
Hollenstein, and u
Fake fur, ceramic, fat and silicone,
deer musk
2018

project space 11 (In My Feelings)

Anna-Lisa Högler and u
pencil on paper, mirror plastic
sheet, blinking heart and packing
tape
2018

One morning in Los Angeles, I had to go to Sean MacAlister's house quite early. We had only known each other for about a week. Ana and I were organizing an exhibition at his exhibition space 67 Steps. I was staying at Lila's house; she was in Switzerland with Harley. That morning, I didn't have time to eat breakfast, I arrived starving to Sean's house. He made me two pieces of toast with peanut butter and jam, and gave me some coffee. I had never eaten peanut butter. It's cultural. In France, it's difficult to find and I found it kind of gross. The idea of putting peanuts on bread seemed absurd to me, like putting butter on bread with cheese might have seemed absurd to Sean. But at the end of this breakfast, I felt very well.

I knew my mind had just constructed a strong memory, which in the same way as the Liège waffles made by my grandmother from the North of France, would enter into the pantheon of memories burned into my brain. In itself, the toast didn't produce anything, it was simply the entry way towards a whole host of other memories. It reminded me of my presence in Los Angeles, and particularly in Sean's house, which by virtue of his hospitality, generosity, and kindness seemed like a second home. I also knew that in a few minutes Ana would be there and that increased my sense of satisfaction. In this mental space, when looking back at it today, there is as much the presence of Sean, the taste of peanut butter, Luca's artworks, as the expectation of seeing Ana. A photographer was coming to capture images of an exhibition that would forever be part of our shared history. These images would enter into our imaginary and in a certain way, always belong to us. They would add themselves to the flood of images that we have produced, along with the artists, in showing and working with them during different exhibitions.

Before writing this text in my room in Paris, where I hear children in the courtyard, alternating between cries and laughter, and I can feel the crisp early September air coming from the Canal St Martin, I made myself toast with peanut butter. I didn't immediately realize what I had just unconsciously done: I created the conditions for writing. For in eating, I saw images in my memory, those which take place in Los Angeles. It seems to me that in each exhibition made with Ana, we've produced an incalculable number of memories through the artwork exhibited. As if each work entered into us, living in us, becoming an unconscious part of our imaginary that is nourished by new and rich acquisitions.

u is a letter from the word "current" on the 67 Steps website. The project spaces shown here are collaborations by u and artists who have entered and shaped this shared cosmology. They are new image captures for our unconscious, integral elements of a universe, that will inform future aesthetic experiences.

Sean met Brittany Shepherd in 2014 when they were both living in Toronto. Since then, she began the exhibition space The Table, furthering her connection with Sean that began when they were working at the same coffee shop. They would sit on the bench in front of the cafe and would talk about books and films and she introduced him to many artists, filmmakers, and writers. Several of the artists invited to make “project spaces” with u have started or worked in their own project spaces. Hers is a simple print of a hand wearing a glove. It reminded me of objects we might find in the street that have been lost by their owners. We never really want to touch it but they have started to be in the back of our mind of our daily life.

They are most of all images, never objects, except if we are forced to touch or move them. In this slight displacement from an object to an image, she is playing with this idea of an illusion: is it an photograph or a sculpture? For her, this artwork is a representation of a phantom limb, something that is missing but that we can't stop thinking about. Is it still part of ourselves although it is gone? We could think about how we carry images, objects, and people in our mind that we have lost as many different phantom limbs. We carry them just as we carry our desires and drives and we sometimes simply need to grieve them in able to be order to move on. In her work, she uses soap or gloves to imply the many roles of these objects as they are used in different jobs as well as in different social classes. In her recent solo show *Facades* at Bunker 2 presented in Toronto, she proposed a reflection on new understandings of public and private space in relationship to community, class, and gender.

It is something that she interrogates again in printing this glove that could be an elegant accessory as well as a magician's. Both deal with illusion and what is hidden. In that sense, she never stops asking what is part of our material world and what is part of our fantasy world. Who is the character that we are playing in our social life and who is our real self, the subconscious one in our private life?

Anna-Lisa Höglér's work asks much the same questions through her practice grounded by drawing. I discovered her work when she showed at Shanaynay in July 2017 but I met her for the first time when she was running the exhibition space Belle Air in Essen, Germany with her collective New Bretagne. The drawing she made with u is the product of long-term research over a period of several years focused on producing a suit that she herself could wear. Not a suit for a specific event, but something for daily wear. In her eyes, a suit incarnates a kind of masculinity and an image of power that offers the wearer self-confidence and self-assurance. It's a manner for her to perform within a daily space. She spent some time looking for this perfect suit, one that would be affordable, but in reference to luxury brands that she particularly liked.

The installation shows four silhouettes in which we can only see torsos with masculine lines and a particular kind of elegance that, to my French sensibility, seems very German. This silhouettes of course remind me of Niklas, Frieder, and Alex, the men of New Bretagne with whom Anna-Lisa worked. They also had an assured air wearing Prada pants or Missoni sweaters, easily recognizable to me as I share an interest in fashion. What is at play here, however, is not as superficial as it seems. When Anna-Lisa looks for this suit, she is not looking for an outfit merely for appearances, she is looking for confidence. The installation seeks to embody this. The four characters are close, bonded. They could be the same person repeated four times or four distinct individuals.

Inside, we discover a heart framed by two mirrors, like a kind of alter evoking love, desire, and identity. For her, questioning and building identity through the wearing of a suit has as much to do with lesbian desire as societal pressures of age. Without any real training or education of how to do so, artists of our generation face enormous difficulties in tilting towards the desire for more stable, healthy ways of living. As a response, Anna-Lisa turns to wearing a suit in order to play a person accustomed to the professional world. This dichotomy between representation and the intimate comes to the forefront of her project space and is revealing of a way of approaching a relationship with the self. These mirrors show that which we never quite manage to be.

I have always wondered what was our first connection was in my history with Naoki Sutter-Shudo. Did we talk about art or about music, did we talk about my boyfriend or his girlfriend? Love or friendship? From our first meeting, I have always enjoyed our exchanges because it was so easy to speak to each other. As soon as we started to work together at Shanaynay, I knew that collaboration would come naturally. We were deeply involved and passionate, obsessed with the art world and art history. Those layers are kind of incrustated in our minds. Talking about art has always been our way to encourage our critical discourse about the world at large. When I look at Naoki's artworks, I feel a little bit sad, something like an awkwardness.

There is always something about to break or already broken that comes from our political and social system, and a feeling of nostalgia. His three spaces made with u have include symbols like those found in his previous artworks. Those subconscious symbols come from Naoki's personal life or are related to History. The checker pattern reminded me of work in which he refers to Freemasonry. In different ways, Naoki shows us how symbols have been torn outrageously by morality, how everything could be black or white. In psychoanalysis, there is a gray area in which nothing is very clear and you can't use Manichaeism to differentiate good and evil. I think we have this in common with Naoki, a big part of our lives is in this gray area where those symbols doesn't fit very well. The spaces that he has made are also constricted by the box but deal with the capacity to think about our universe, parallel universes, different universes, or the origin of the universe. The moon and sun represented schematically are also symbols of our world. Those boxes contains different versions of our universe, or what it might be if we were not alienated by social discriminations and our economical and political system.

As soon as I have started to know the visual vocabulary of Benjamin Reiss's works, it became forever engraved in my mind. And when we have started to talk about the showing u in Portland during Utopian vision Art Fair, I couldn't stop thinking about his recent show at Bel Ami in Los Angeles that I saw while I was there in May 2018. The four fish are run through from mouth to anus, sickly hung in the rectangle box. They have the texture and the color of a childhood memento. Something that is obviously related to what we had on our desk when we were children, like an eraser in a shape of a fish that wasn't able to erase anything but which we could play with instead of listening to our teacher in class. While we were discussing his project, Benny confessed to being obsessed to this day by the grave responsibility of caring for fish, reptiles and other (sometimes imaginary) animals in his anxiety dreams.

This confession was very disturbing to me because I have been obsessed by the same kind of dreams during which I need to take care of cats, dogs as well as mice and rats. If our dreams were brought together, we could be the happy owners of a crazy bestiary. Those animals are seen as desires and drives in psychoanalysis. Something that we have to keep alive or accept to let die. Those drives might have been counteracted and restricted since we were using our erasers to escape from our daily life. Benny also referred to the Dr. Seuss book *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*, in which two kids are delighted and educated by a parade of all the strange and different beings of the world, each of whom is reduced to a rhyming sentence about their superficial characteristics or a particular funny behavior. Benny started to think about this as a very simplified representation of reality and how this reality can be shrunk or reduced in the art spaces too. In a sense, this simplicity is dual.

It brings the possibility to turn something into a symbol but it also pushes it to be reduced as the minimal. When you look for the first time at his work, it could appear as something very simplified by the choices of the color and the texture but as soon as you start to look deeply in it, you realize how his system is complex and related to science. In a sense, he offers us a path to our own subconscious. Through simplified dreams, we can understand through symbols the complexity of our desires, like the images of those fish being quartered from their mouth to their anus.

Marion Vasseur Raluy

I went to 67 Steps before I knew who Sean was, for the inaugural exhibition, a collaboration by Hanna Hur and Michael Kennedy Costa. 67 Steps stuck out of the side of a hill, overlooking a small canyon. You could see the next hill over, some staircases, some houses, some yards. Bamboo surrounded the deck on three sides. The sky changed color quickly; it was February.

I took a photo of a red light illuminating a stalk of bamboo. Other people took photos like it too and they are visible on the 67 Steps website. The red bamboo was always supposed to be an image. Hanna and Michael burn images into the brain, they scratch them into the skin.

Their individual practices seem to share some ancestral ground. Quiet and considered, their gestures are economical without being sparse. The resulting images are at once primal and otherworldly. Hanna's work is more overtly rooted in the spiritual and the psychic, an ongoing challenge in how to make the invisible, the unspeakable, and the unknowable translate into image. Michael's are infused with an earthier sensuality—sex, alienation, the uncanny, crossed gazes, unseeing eyes, disgust, confusion. If these images are dreamlike, they are a dream of embodied consciousness gone awry. Of the order of poetry—Michael's other medium, and sometimes Hanna's too—they both offer measured evocations of slippery concepts.

These two practices circled each other at 67 Steps; Hanna drawing responses to Michael's words, Hanna's strings responding to Michael's drawings, Michael reading Hanna's words. Now, they've stepped into each other. Is it anecdotal to mention that since the 67 Steps show, they've moved in together? I can't convince myself that it is.

Their project space was made in their home, an activity they would turn to in the evenings. A selection of Michael's drawings was transferred to transparent paper and then cut for the individual lines. Michael made lines, Hanna made copper circles. This became the basis of the form, with the two artists taking turns placing lines onto the surface of the space until they became spirals. Or rather, until the spiral revealed itself. These lines and spirals and circles became many things. To name them might be to pin it down too firmly, like driving a nail through the foot of a dancer to the floor. There are keys though: A spiral staircase. A grid. A third. The difference between a labyrinth and a maze.

In those evenings, at their home, they stitched their DNA together. Sean was there too.

I didn't meet Sean until several months after Hanna and Michael's show. A mutual friend had his birthday in West Hollywood. I posted a geo-loc-

lized photo on Instagram and specific kinds of strangers liked it: a fitness coach, an influencer, and an account called objectcatering. I said to our friend, “Look, even some catering company liked this photo”. A few hours later, Sean joined us. He introduced himself saying, “I’m that catering company”.

Object Catering is Sean’s only social media presence. The Instagram bio simply reads: “Nomadic catering project serving unaltered street level objects”. His name appears nowhere.

u is Sean’s newest project. It can only be found on the internet by clicking the letter “u” in the word “Current” on the 67 Steps website, where again his name is nowhere to be found.

As with Hanna and Michael, this is the second collaboration by Lila de Magalhaes and Harley Hollenstein. Their first was an exhibition in a project space that is a bathroom in Los Angeles's Chinatown. It is described in part as a site for "solitude and contemplation". These collaborative works presented here are called project spaces because they embody the relationship that unfolds between an artist and a host. Negotiations are made and intimacies are formed. The space asks to be filled and the collaborators decide together to how to do this.

Lila's individual practice is populated by pastels, horses, fairies, and high, high heels, but also spirals of shit, stains on bed sheets, bleeding cherry eyes, and depressed, smoking sprites. The fantastical and the poetic is never without the sinister and the grotesque. The pink fur we see here has also housed bacteria and been flattened by butts.

In a terrain filled with fake fur, Lila's hand holds Harley's finger. Their project space doesn't shy away from the sickly sweet or the simply sick. It's the kind of joke you can only make when you know you've already won someone over and they love you. It's a private language, built of private shares of images and references.

Alix Ferrand lives in Montreal, we have never met in person but spoke on Skype a few weeks ago to talk about her practice. Her work, like her presence on the internet, is enigmatic. Much of it is born from intuition, an interest in the natural world, as well as the spiritual one. To welcome the spring, she organized an expedition into the Mont-Royal, the small mountain that gives her hometown its name, to harvest natural elements to cook with snow to make “Mud Soup”. This soupe à la boue was used as a potion to set intentions for the coming season.

This day is documented in both photos and video on her website and looks like a lot of fun. People speak a mix of French and English (not unlike my conversations with Marion) and wear warm, comfortable clothing. There is a sense of communal belief translated into action—in a word, ritual. There is snow on the ground in April; it is an invocation of the spring they have to believe is imminent. In France right now, it is la rentrée. It’s in the same spirit as “back to school”, but because French seasons and rhythms are so ritualized, is imbued with a different power. The cities come back to life after August’s mass exodus. People answer emails again, businesses reopen. The art world begins its season. It’s a time of year that I’ve always loved and miss dearly now that I don’t live in Paris anymore. The belief that time does have resting places and starting places is comforting. That kind of belief is one I somehow still cling to. There is plenty to be cynical about. But I do take comfort in the fact that people, for all kinds of reasons, now that it’s fall, are starting to come together again in galleries, project spaces, studios, museums, and warehouses, to look and think about things that only have meaning and value because we choose to believe that they do. Despite the market and the school system and International Art Speak and the art world’s carbon footprint, this is something I still find beautiful.

Alix does too. Her project space, like her other work, is touching in its simplicity. It asks us to look forward to the thing we haven’t found yet, to believe it’s there to be found.

Utopian visions are in a sense what I have described in the above, and are also an ongoing preoccupation for Kim Farkas, for whom utopia might best be achieved through systemization.

The last time I saw Kim at his studio, he showed me the book *L'utopie de tout plastique* (The Utopia of Plastics). Below is a translated jacket blurb sourced from the internet:

«The sixties are marked by unprecedented prosperity and technological progress. To this optimism corresponds an extraordinary freedom of creation until the oil crisis of 1973 which tempers this enthusiasm. The vogue of plastic is linked to this society of abundance. Yellow, red, orange, soft, hard, inflatable, it identifies with cheap, serial and disposable productions. Starting from a private collection unique in the world, the book offers a selection of plastic objects created between 1960 and 1973. Tupperware box, Kelton watch, Courrèges dress, Ettore Sottsass portable typewriter Valentine for Olivetti, first chair of Verner Panton, Joe Colombo ABS plastic chair, Niki de Saint Phalle's Nana, Caesar's Compression, cupola of the United States Pavilion by Richard Buckminster Fuller at the Montreal World's Fair or Frei Otto and Günter Behnisch overhead roof for the stadium of the Olympic Games in Munich, all show their diversity, their spirit and sometimes their beauty of the inventiveness of the time.»

The book is beautiful but has been out of print for a long time. I would like to purchase it but it is prohibitively expensive. Kim often speaks of his work not as a system of beliefs, but of distribution. This system, however, walks a fine line between randomness and design, modernist and factory models of art-making. Fandom, DIY, and hacktivism are recurring references of thought and making. And yet, the underlying thread of his practice is actually the technical skill he possesses. This skill is distinctive and personal and not easily or voluntarily distributed. Kim would refer to this as the irony.

A project space is a kind of belief system too. For the first time, Kim has made his system fit within someone else's system. His method of painting is readapted here in an almost randomized motif, at once referencing sci-fi, action painting, custom auto painting, 90's static electricity toys. There is a slim space that exists between the mass production of industries and the DIY cultures that respond to them. This is where Kim can be found.

Is the irony the tension between control and creative collaboration? If a project space is a system designed to contain one's own vision of utopia, how much flexibility is necessary so that filling the space does not destroy its form?

Ana Iwataki

