

of French surrealism. Cahun writes as one struck by the power of language to estrange subjectivity: 'And right at the back of the slot used for breathing, a bitten tongue'; where desire is reciprocated only within an erotic assemblage of objects including oneself: 'Her eyes become cloudy paler, her breasts prowl.' This last sentence concludes a memorable sequence in the film where, to the sound of waves, light slowly spreads from the bottom edge of the frame upwards revealing a naked, kneeling and masked figure, elbows over her breasts and hands around her neck.

Pucill applies *Aveux non avenues* to license edgy tableaux prompted by Cahun's photographs, which also provide the cut-out body parts used in stop-motion animation sequences that begin each section and which are accompanied by jaunty organ fairground music, quite distinct from the dreamlike pace of the rest of the film. For the character we recognise as Cahun, Pucill uses ten performers and seven voice-over speakers, including herself. In the display of the photographs, Pucill has inserted seven of her own among the vintage Cahun prints that have come from Jersey Heritage Collections. This surrender to multiple identities follows Cahun's working procedure – 'Why does God force me to change faces, to wreak havoc with my deplorable qualities?' – revealing Pucill's call to her former lover and mentors to participate in an intimate engagement with identities. I'm reminded of Mike Kelley's title 'Playing with Dead Things' for his 2004 essay on the uncanny. But this multiplicity of working partners, of subjectivities, best recalls Deleuze and Guattari's explanation of 'haecceity' as a way of thinking of individuality as mutable, fungible and of an indefinite temporality: 'You have the individuality of a day, a season, a year, a life (regardless of its duration) – a climate, a wind, a fog, a swarm, a pack.' ■

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London Round-up

Maureen Paley • Victoria Miro • Frith Street Gallery • Maddox Arts

The diverse and rich practice of Canadian artist, publisher and curator **AA Bronson** is difficult to tackle in a small gallery show, but his first solo exhibition at Maureen Paley, 'Hexenmeister', succeeds in doing just that. On the ground floor, two important

AA Bronson
'Hexenmeister' 2015
installation view



historical works are shown, both by the influential Canadian trio General Idea, which Bronson established together with Felix Partz and Jorge Zontal in the late 1960s. *Mondo Cane 2 (Nine Figures)*, 1984, is an acrylic poster-like painting, in which nine schematic poodles are performing a canine orgy. This colourful mayhem stands in contrast to the monochromatic *Black AIDS (prototype)*, 1991, shown here for the first time. It is part of General Idea's famous 'AIDS' series, in which they appropriated Robert Indiana's iconic 1967 work *LOVE* in reaction to the AIDS crisis. Bronson continues to address the desire for cleanliness in a time of a terrifying epidemic – and the hopeless attempt to secure it in the face of social injustice – in his recent conceptual work: an old-fashioned broom enclosed in a vitrine, with which he swept the pavement outside the gallery just hours before the opening (*Broom Closet*, 2015). The label credits 'JX Williams' as the artist, Bronson's alter ego. Bronson is known for the collaborative nature of his practice, and some of the works in the exhibition are indeed made in collaboration with other artists – dead, alive or fictional.

On the upper floor things get darker. Bronson, who has long been interested in mysticism and shamanism, has created a kind of shrine, a tent made from a single ash tree and covered with fabrics (*Treehouse*, 2015). A taxidermied fox trying to catch a raven guards the entrance. It all seems like the site of a performative ceremony. On the wall, Bronson, apparently the occupier of this tent, is seen in a large lightbox photograph, naked and coloured red from head to toe (*Red*, in collaboration with Ryan Brewer, 2011). The photograph was taken in the woods between Fire Island Pines and Cherry Grove, two gay communities located on the outskirts of New York. The woodlands between the two function as a kind of temporary autonomous zone where, as in Bronson's works, life and death meet: many sexual acts take place there, and in the 1980s to 1990s it was a custom for those dying from AIDS to collectively return there for their final days. The ashes of some are even scattered in the woods. Although the works themselves have no reference to this cultural context, the sense of an outsider community is strong. Less strong is *The Book of the Sacred Magic*, 2015, a book bought by Bronson online, displayed here on a custom-designed table and, according to the label, blessed by the artist. Unlike the broom, which stands in strong relation to the historical works, this conceptual object seems redundant and out of place.

The last room contains Bronson and Philip Aarons's show 'Queer Zines', an archive featuring over a hundred queer publications from the mid-1970s to today, exhibited for the first time in the UK. This project was also manifested in a book, first published in 2008 by Printed Matter, the New York artists' bookshop directed by Bronson. A book is perhaps a more suitable format for the intensive reading offered here; however, the physical assembly of these various publications is compelling: a collection of outsiders' voices calling out to form a community. A wallpaper, designed in a traditional style by Yeonjune Jung, *What a Beautiful World*, 2014, gives the reading room an intimate feel. At a second glance, one discovers that its drawings depict symbols of homophobia and intolerance, such as the hanging of two Iranian gay teenagers in 2005. It is reminiscent of Robert Gober's wallpapers of domesticated violent scenes of a racist lynching and the artifice of nature. Gober, as is Bronson, was part of a generation of US gay artists who dealt with, and who survived, the AIDS crisis.