

Generator #1: States of Matter

Maria Rodski with Lee “Scratch” Perry / Volker Schaner

March 29–June 12, 2024, Mönchsberg [3]

“I’m a miracle man, things happen which I don’t plan [...] Instant input, instant output.” That is how the Jamaican musician **Lee “Scratch” Perry** described his practice, which was informed by the immediate and spontaneous synergy of action and reaction. Perry helped pave the way for Dub, Reggae and Ska and has been hailed as a pioneer of remixing and the mashup. Perhaps most importantly, his work was a key contribution to the formation of a distinctive Jamaican identity.

Perpetual metamorphosis and transformation were also hallmarks of Perry’s yearslong collaboration with the artist **Maria Rodski**. It resulted in objects in a diverse assortment of media and techniques, including totem-like wall pieces incorporating old CDs and art postcards, scribbles and lyrics, mal- functioning vintage recording devices, Black Madonna figures, and stones thought to possess mythical power.

The filmmaker **Volker Schaner** documented the experimental work of the two of them, making us witnesses to the creative process. Schaner also shows selected scenes from his video work with Lee “Scratch” Perry from 1999 to 2019 in the focused one-room exhibition at the Museum der Moderne Salzburg.

Maria Rodski and Volker Schaner on their collaboration with Lee “Scratch” Perry and works shown in the exhibition

Maria Rodski

My collaboration with Lee “Scratch” Perry is characterized by the concept of constantly changing states of matter. We were working with the aspect of decay, materials exposed to weather and fire, resulting in a fascinating play between erosion through time and preservation against time. In 2014, I met Lee for the first time, after working for the animation scenes in the movie *Lee Scratch Perry’s Vision of Paradise*. Our working together developed into a form of conversation in his studio in Einsiedeln in Switzerland. I

brought paintings from my atelier and he would place them prominently in his studio and add his scribbles and different items on them, adapting them to his space. Then he prepared a place inside the studio to install my own little atelier there and in his shaman-like way he would burn incense, spray perfumes, and install baroque arrangements around the paintings.

Soon, the works started to relate more and more with the surroundings. We understood that our way to do the collages was also to reveal what was underneath, the depth between what was seen and what was unseen, and we wanted to let that process be visible in the painting. Lee liked to identify little stories in the paintings, inventing characters or finding them in random splashes on the palettes that we were using.

Like Lee, I took many pictures during these painting sessions, as documenting became more a process of discovering. When we looked at the photos together later we could see things we didn't see before and understood where the work was going. In the same time they became constituent working material for the sessions to come. Printed pictures of previous works became collages in new ones and you had that effect of painting inside the painting and the feeling that the time we spent together was recapitulating itself over and over and generating new work. The exhibition presents two artworks from these sessions: *Africa in Danger* and *Dollar Hit*.

In 2015, Lee's studio burned down. Melted pieces of plastic were hanging from the ceiling. The dissolved surfaces revealed hidden words like "Fire" or "Burn down Hell" that now got a different meaning. I peeled collages off the walls and collected the burned remains from the studio while Volker Schaner was filming. We learned that from 1995 on, Lee was adding collections of decoupages of articles about himself, Rastafarianism, black memorabilia, comics, souvenirs, and posters onto the walls. Now, the fire, smoke and heat melted and fused this multitude of materials into compact sealed blackened surfaces. Together with Lee, we displayed the peeled collages on canvases and it looked like the walls were unfolding and showing the studio from inside out. Seen together, Volker's film *Story of Fire* and the works exclusively recreate the climate of that space that doesn't exist anymore.

In the renovated studio, we started to build various sculptures and left them outside. The aspect of erosion, deeply explored when dealing with the burnt fragments taken from Lee's studio, was again very present, this time as a result of material exposed to weather. The effect that nature had on the works gave them an element of realness and literalness. As Lee put it: "The works look real."

Volker Schaner

From when I met Lee Perry the first time until we saw each other for the last time—from 1999 through 2019—I came with a camera. In the beginning, the walls of his studio were almost white, just two big "X" and an "I" in sky blue and some pictures of him, glued leaves and lots of words and spells. I kept filming how the walls were changing layer by layer, with new posters, portraits of himself, maps, crosses, letters and numbers.

Always when I left, I burned my recordings onto DVDs for Lee. And when I returned a couple of weeks or months later, he had them still playing in loop. He seemed to study them. Every time when he went to his house in Jamaica he took the DVDs with him and stored them there. Some he buried in the ground, some I found again there later.

I became something like a permanent witness of his performances and rituals, his surroundings, his reasonings, his art. I came to visit him every year in summer, winter, spring and autumn, like a circle. It became a beloved routine and a natural thing. Even after the completion of the movie *Lee Scratch Perry's Vision of Paradise* I continued our ritual and witnessed crucial moments like the burning of his studio in 2015 and its reconstruction. The last moment we had together in 2019 was a fantastic rainbow showing up in the landscape and Lee performing an arch with his arms.

The installation *Trinity* which is shown in the exhibition has three screens, each showing a three-hour video simultaneously. The first spans from 1999 until 2013 (left screen), the second from 2013 until 2015 (middle screen), the third one from 2015 until 2019 (right screen). Seen together, the work enables an immersive experience of Lee "Scratch" Perry in his studio in permanent transformation, a feeling of continuity of his activities and a display of the textures of time.

Most of the scenes in *Trinity* are previously unreleased footage. The music playing in the headphone of the work *Stepping in Glue* is the song *Cool Walk*. We recorded this song together in 1999 as part of a whole album we never released.

Biographies

Lee “Scratch” Perry

Lee “Scratch” Perry (Kendal, JM, 1936–Lucea, JM, 2021) was a Jamaican producer, songwriter, singer, and DJ and a highly influential figure in the evolution of reggae. He was one of the first music producers in Jamaica to use the studio as an instrument in its own right. Perry is regarded as a pioneer of dub, the instrumental form of reggae, in which parts of a rhythm track are eliminated and others are emphasized by means of echo, distortion, repetition, and backward looping.

Maria Rodski

Maria Rodski (Medgidia, RO, 1985–Augsburg, DE) is a multidisciplinary artist. She graduated from the National University of Arts in Bucharest with a specialization in painting. Her work has been featured in group exhibitions in Romania including at Căminul Artei, Bucharest, and The Art Museum, Constanța. She had solo exhibitions at Red Gallery, London, in 2015 and Funkhaus Berlin in 2016.

Volker Schaner




Filmmaker Volker Schaner (Augsburg, DE, 1968) started his career at the age of 18 when he became an assistant to director Peter Fleischmann during the last weeks of shooting of the science-fiction movie *Hard to Be a God*. This started a life-long friendship and work relationship that lasted until Fleischmann’s death in 2021. Schaner studied literature, linguistics, and history in Munich and started to shoot a documentary about his experiences in Prague, where he spent a lot of time in the theatre scene (*Praha—Stage Of the Unexplainable*, 2003). He moved to Berlin in 1997


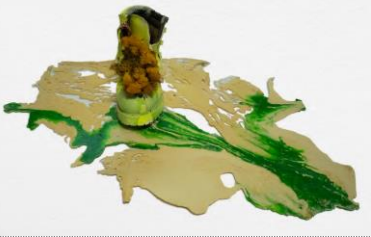



and in 1999, during the Cannes Film Festival, he eventually got in contact with Lee “Scratch” Perry.






List of Exhibited Works






The authorship of all works, unless otherwise stated, lies with Maria Rodski and Lee Perry. The exhibited works are courtesy of Maria Rodski and Volker Schaner.



MARIA RODSKI and LEE PERRY

	<p>JAH LIVE PT 1, 2017 found objects and materials, oilpastel, resin, on wood</p>
	<p>RAW, 2018 stone, found objects, grass, photo in resin</p>
	<p>STONEHENGE, 2019 found objects, stones, oil, resin on wood</p>



	<p>STONEHENGE, 2019 found objects, stones, oil, resin on wood</p>
	<p>Fragment from the installation SLOW WALK, 2019 Assemblage</p>
	<p>THE CLOCK, 2019 handprint, collage on object</p>
	<p>MIRROR X, 2018 mirror, found objects, moss, resin on wood</p>
	<p>KILLBILL, 2018 mirror, found objects, moss, resin</p>


	<p>LIKE STEPPING IN GLUE, 2018 Assemblage</p>
	<p>THE BLUE PLANET, 2019 found objects, resin</p>
	<p>Fragment from the installation SLOW WALK, 2019 Assemblage</p>
	<p>Fragment from the installation SLOW WALK, 2019 Assemblage</p>
	<p>STONE BIRD, 2019 Assemblage</p>

 <p>The artwork consists of a grid of approximately 15 small, square photographs or prints. Above the grid, several strips of paper with handwritten text are attached. The visible text includes "SKY CHANGER", "MUST RAIN", "WINDS FROM", and "HOT". The photographs appear to be various scenes, possibly related to nature or urban environments.</p>	<p>PAGES, 2019 Installation, acryl, oil, marker, resin, paper, found objects, glue on canvas</p>
 <p>The painting is highly colorful and abstract, dominated by bright reds, oranges, and yellows, suggesting fire or intense heat. It features various figures, including a large, stylized face with wide eyes and a blue mouth. There are also smaller figures and symbols scattered throughout the composition. The overall style is expressive and chaotic.</p>	<p>AFRICA IN DANGER, 2015 acryl, paper, glue on canvas</p>
 <p>The sculpture is a three-dimensional assemblage. It features a light-colored, classical-style stone pedestal. On top of the pedestal sits a dark, rectangular resin block. A thin, dark branch or twig is placed on top of the resin block, extending upwards and to the left. The overall composition is simple and evocative.</p>	<p>UNTITLED, 2019 stones on resin block</p>
 <p>The fragment shows a small, colorful assemblage of objects, including what looks like a small white house or structure, a red object, and various other small items. It is placed on a black surface, and there are some white, liquid-like splatters or marks around the base of the assemblage.</p>	<p>Fragment from the installation SLOW WALK, 2019 Assemblage</p>
 <p>This fragment shows a different assemblage of objects, similar to the one in the previous row. It features a small, colorful structure with various items attached to it, all set against a black background with some white splatters.</p>	<p>Fragment from the installation SLOW WALK, 2019 Assemblage</p>

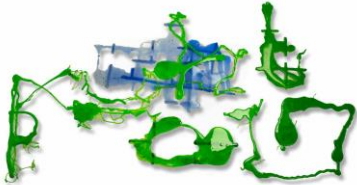


	<p>UNTITLED, 2019 stones on resin block</p>
	<p>THE YARD, 2019 acryl, oil, marker, resin, paper, found objects, glue on canvas</p>



STORY OF FIRE

	<p>THE WIRE, 2016 wire, resin on mirror</p>
	<p>THE CRAWFFT, 2017 assembled wood pieces, burnt paper, found object</p>

	<p>THE BURNT, 2016 burnt paper, acryl, oil, laquer on canvas</p>
	<p>THE BURNT, 2016 burnt paper, acryl, oil, laquer on canvas</p>

MARIA RODSKI

	<p>TIME UNIT, 2023 resin and pigment</p>
	<p>TIME UNIT, 2023 resin and pigment</p>
	<p>HOURGLASS, 2023 mirror ball, glass, stockings, resin</p>

	ACRYLIC BOX, 2023 Acrylic, resin, wood
	ACRYLIC BOX, 2023 Acrylic, resin, wood

Videos and Music in the Exhibition

Volker Schaner

Trinity, 2024

Three-channel video installation (color, sound), footage 1999–2023

3 h

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Volker Schaner

Window, 2024

Video (color, silent)

15 min.

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Volker Schaner und Lee Perry

Cool Walk, 1999/2024

Sound installation for the object *Stepping in Glue*

43 Min.

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