



*Untitled, Scotch tape, some bottles of water, desktop or workplace, 2014*

## Occasionals II

*Untitled, Scotch tape, some bottles of water, desktop or workplace*

Marie Cool Fabio Balducci

11.05.—01.06.2024

Tlön Projects is pleased to announce the exhibition *Untitled, Scotch tape, some bottles of water, desktop or workplace* by Marie Cool Fabio Balducci. This marks the first time their work will be displayed in the Netherlands. The exhibition is the second in a series of three Occasionals planned for this year in cooperation with Rongwong in Amsterdam. This exhibition concept, that is an annual part of our Satellite Programme, highlights a single work from Tlön Projects' *imaginary collection* in a specific location.

The Occasionals were inspired by a comment American artist Mark Rothko made in 1959 when he was staying in Cornwall (UK) and went to inspect a disused Methodist chapel with a view to purchasing it as an exhibition space for his paintings: *It would be good if little places could be set up all over the country, like a little country chapel, where the traveller or wanderer, could come for an hour to meditate on a single painting....*

Marie Cool Fabio Balducci have been collaborating under their double-barrelled moniker since 1995, thereby uniting their identities and expressing themselves as a single voice. They were both unemployed when they met and it was precisely this situation of not being able to do anything economically viable which led to them *doing what they do* and developing a shared vision of art and the world.

Since then, they have been creating what they term “actions” in response to issues such as power, dominant relationships, individual and object marginalisation in society, the democratic illusion and the lack of actual value and meaning inherent in the capitalist system. These actions consist of repeating basic activities using quotidian objects and natural phenomena: sticky tape, A4 sheets of paper, pencils, headphones, tissues, cotton thread, breadcrumbs, gold stars, a metal ruler, sunlight, water, etc.

All their actions are untitled, the elements involved objectively enumerated, yet their origin is crucial to understanding their selection. The pencils for *Untitled, colored pencils on clearance, desktop* (2010) originate from a clearance sale and the confluence of four sheets of paper in *Untitled, four sheets of paper (A4), desktop* (2005) simulates an earthquake, transferring the concept of the work's revolt.

These slow, considered actions are performed silently, the only sounds those the objects make when manipulated. Whether there is or isn't an audience, whether the latter are interested or disturbed, changes nothing intrinsically for them. The time required to perform an action varies and they are often repeated, just like labourers' serial actions become routine.

In the early years, Marie Cool was the only performer. Since 2010, she has also transferred the actions' performance to others including friends, curators and job seekers from outside the art scene. Every

action has neutral characteristics, is impenetrable and is performed with such focus that all interference generated by the performer's identity is obviated. However, this sparseness and the refusal to give in to the spectacular is accompanied by an unexpected poetry and beauty. This elicits a sense of fascination among the viewers watching an investigation unfold. Anyone can understand these actions even though their simplicity may also be alienating.

The standard business desk, with its smooth veneered surface and somewhat blocky appearance is almost always present in their work. The tables function as work surfaces, are reversed, erected, put in the sun or block the entrance – the object's sculptural qualities contribute to the installation-aspect of their work. This type of desk, a replica of Donald Judd's work table, functions as a stand-in for capitalist entrepreneurship and management, and is related to company culture's tertiary, non-essential functions. They also symbolise the power of and the decisions taken for others by a small minority. Marie Cool Fabio Balducci's actions re-appropriate the space, yet only to produce nothing – the actions are processes and run a fixed course without failure or success. They just take place and reflect on their own operating environment and the structures that control us.

An interesting group of works within the artists' oeuvre uses water: pouring or spilling it onto a desktop. Water bottled in plastic constitutes a charged prop for the artists who are increasingly concerned about water's global commodification, which is inherent in the capitalist system and the latter's reckless addiction to economic growth. The increasing privatisation and commercialisation of water has birthed a situation in which the supply of this crucial resource is controlled by a select group of multinationals and leads to social injustice and ecosystem damage. And it is precisely this bottled water that is frequently present in offices and on meeting room tables. So, when Fabio Balducci poured the contents of four bottles of water onto a meeting room table, the water pooling, then cascading off, for *Untitled, bottles of water, meeting table* (2011 – 2018), this can be viewed as an action aimed at disrupting the status quo.

For the work *Untitled, Scotch tape, some bottles of water, desktop or workplace* (2014), the surface of a desk will be framed with sticky tape which will also be stuck lengthways in strips, a hand-breadth apart. Water will be poured between these lines and thanks to its capillary action, it will sit higher than the surrounding sticky tape dams. The performer, at the head of the table, will rest her hand on the water, slowly dragging some towards herself then allowing it to gradually return to its initial position.



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**Curated by:**

Chris Bestebreurtje and Petra Kuipers

**Venue:**

Rongwrong – centre for art and theory

Binnen Bantammerstraat 2, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

**Opening Times:**

Friday and Saturday 14:00—18:00

**Public Programme:**

11.05.2024

Opening, 16:00—19:00

01.06.2024

Finissage, 16:00—19:00

**Generously supported by:**

AFK (Amsterdam Fund for the Arts), Cultuurfonds Nederland, Kervahut—Collection Laurent Fiévet, Mondriaan Fund and P420 Bologna

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