

# ARTFORUM

## 2014 Glasgow International

### VARIOUS VENUES

Although officially themeless, this year's Glasgow International was nevertheless woven together by some common threads. It was the sixth edition of the festival and the first under the artistic direction of Sarah McCrory; as one has come to expect from such biennial undertakings, exhibitions and installations were spread throughout the city, occupying spaces ranging from major public institutions to such quirky, out-of-the-way venues as an underground parking garage, a vendor's stall in a dilapidated shopping center, and a crumbling Edwardian community bathhouse.

In many ways, Glasgow itself emerged as the star of the show. Temporarily reopened (albeit sans heat or running water) for this year's festival, the McLellan Galleries—a grand, Victorian-era museum building that has largely sat empty for many years—housed four of the ten exhibitions that made up the Director's Programme. These included a strong presentation of sculpture and video by Glasgow local Charlotte Prodder and a sensitively selected mini-survey of films and videos by Jordan Wolfson, installed not in the galleries but throughout the disused building's back rooms and hallways. Wolfson's rarely seen early video *The Crisis*, 2004, stood out, the young artist's earnest admixture of anxiety and ambition acquiring new poignancy and humor in light of the combination of approbation and notoriety that has greeted his more recent work.

Humor took center stage at Tramway, where a concise historical survey of works by veteran video and performance artist Michael Smith accompanied an ambitious new installation by Bedwyr Williams, who transformed the former tram depot's cavernous space into a darkened, ersatz forest clearing. From the bowels of a tour bus, its headlights on and luggage strewn about on the ground, Williams projected his latest film, *Echt*, 2014, a winningly dystopian tale of a near-future Britain dominated not so much by conspicuous consumption as by absurdist aggregation, its new ruling class burying itself under layers and layers of stuff. If Smith's hapless everyman Mike reminds us of the enduring contradictions of the American dream as it disappears into the rear-view mirror of history, Williams as dyspeptic narrator cheerfully details a hypothetical apocalypse still to come.

Artforum, Summer 2014

## Tanya Leighton

On the ground floor of the Gallery of Modern Art, Aleksandra Domanović suspended a sequence of enormous, transparent vinyl sheets, each printed with images of 3-D models based on objects in science-fiction films featuring strong female characters. On the rear-most panel, reproduced atop a rendering of the automated operating table from Ridley Scott's *Prometheus* (2012), a 1938 letter from Walt Disney Productions to a young woman seeking employment coolly explains that “women do not do any of the creative work” on the company’s films: The missive offers a stark, real-world contrast to these fictional heroines and prompts us to ask ourselves how much has really changed since then.

Some of the festival’s most rewarding works were on view in its more far-flung outposts. Aided by a clever installation design that gathered disparate works within a series of quasi-architectural “frames,” the group exhibition “*La Chose encadrée*” (The Framed Thing), at the artist-led nonprofit SWG3 Gallery, staged a smart, intergenerational visual conversation around the elastic yet productive notion of the frame as an arena for artistic play. At the Common Guild, Gabriel Kuri juxtaposed fabricated sculptural elements with wooden pallets, metallic space blankets, donated sleeping bags, linens, and toiletries. Evoking such sites as temporary polling places and humanitarian-aid stations, Kuri’s elegant presentation highlighted not only the material qualities of its components but also its own highly contingent nature. At the show’s close, all donated materials were given to two local charities working with the homeless and other at-risk communities: its use-value, like that of much of Glasgow itself, restored in the context of the exhibition.

—Jacob Proctor



Aleksandra Domanović,  
*Things to Come*, 2014,  
UV prints on transparent  
polyester foil. Installation  
view. From the 2014  
Glasgow International.