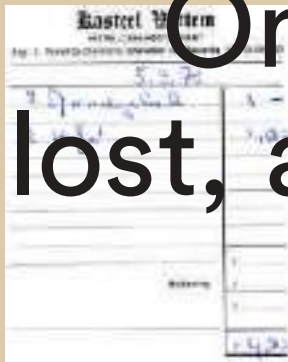


The Unwritten



On forgotten,
lost, and unfinished
history



6.9—23.11.2014

The past is constantly changing. Events are placed in a new light, connections are undone, perspectives altered. History's fluidity is sometimes caused by rediscovered sources or unexpected witnesses. But more often, its basis lies in a shift of morals.

ANNIE KEVANS, RADOVAN KARADZIC, SERBIA, 2004



GERT JAN KOCKEN, TIBBETS' CLOUD, 2010



Sometimes we wish that we had written history differently. Or had left it unwritten because the perspective was one-sided, unjust or brutal. We wish to undo that history because it provides a perspective that we no longer accept or that we even loathe. At other times, our new sensitivities uncover histories that have never been told because they were considered unimportant, forgotten, unfinished or overtaken by other perspectives.



ZACHARY FORMWALT, IN PLACE OF CAPITAL, 2009



ANNIE KEVANS, YASUHIKO ASAKA, JAPAN, 2004

These forgotten stories appeal strongly to our imagination and empathy. We feel nostalgia for a lost world, anger at injustices, euphoria with the correction of those injustices, dismay at a wrong turn and relief at a right one. They are all emotional and sometimes even sensory experiences caused by the unexpected turn that history sometimes takes and the way it has erased other stories.

Based on these feelings, we are inclined to apply moral standards to history. But that presents us with some difficult questions. What happens when the historical figures judged by us appear to have their own moral order, with radically different outcomes? Against the backdrop of a bucolic river scene, Carlos Motta tells us in *Nefandus* of the moral outrage of the Spanish colonists. They were disgusted at what they saw as the



ADELA BABANOVA, RETURN TO ADRIAPORT, 2013

lewd behaviour of the Indian tribes that they systematically massacred. Gert Jan Kocken points out the shifting reputation of the pilot Paul Tibbets, who dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945. In 1945, Paul Tibbets was a hero to many Westerners. Now he is viewed by many as an unfortunate instrument for mass murder, or even as a criminal.

And how does our moral sense work when the crime has not yet been committed? We begin to doubt with the portrait of the 8-year-old Adolf who, we realise with shock, later unleashed a World War under the name of Hitler. Annie Kevans presents him in the



MARGRET, 7 SEPTEMBER, 1970, GÜNTER K.'S 'MARGRET' COLLECTION

ADELA BABANOVA, RETURN TO ADRIAPORT, 2013



ADELA BABANOVA, RETURN TO ADRIAPORT, 2013



company of other 8-year-old boys who later grew up to become some of the most horrible dictators of the 20th century.

Our moral perception of history demands a judgement and also often blame: the pilot that dropped the bomb, the 8-year-old boy who became a dictator or even the beautiful river, which seems to have washed away all the Spanish atrocities.

These stories tap into our knowledge of famous grand narratives. There is also a less well-known past of ideological mistakes, failed blueprints and intimate histories that evoke our empathy and amazement.

In *Names of my Papa and Mama*, Song Ta shows the effects of the one-child policy of the Chinese government. The artist is the second child of parents who could not acknowledge him in public. This forced him to continually use new, 'safe' names for his parents.



In *Return to Adriaport*, Adela Babanova introduces the attempts of the Czechoslovak government to establish a seaside resort. They build a train tunnel to the Adriatic Sea. The excavated soil is used to construct an island off the coast. Years later, the Czechoslovak seaside guests who were interviewed in the documentary and who were forbidden to talk about Adriaport after its closure, talked about the visit to the island being 'the loveliest holiday of their lives'.

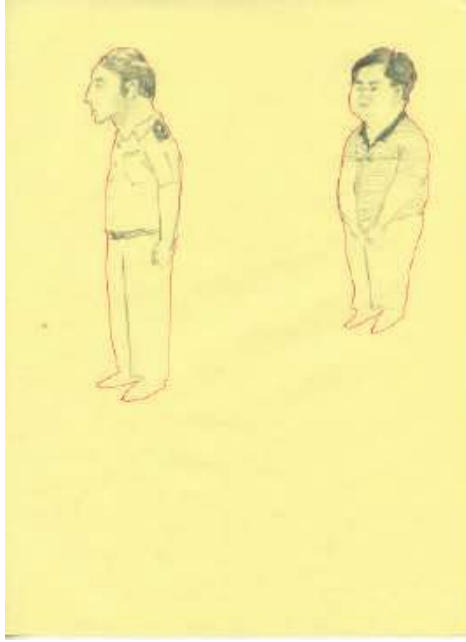
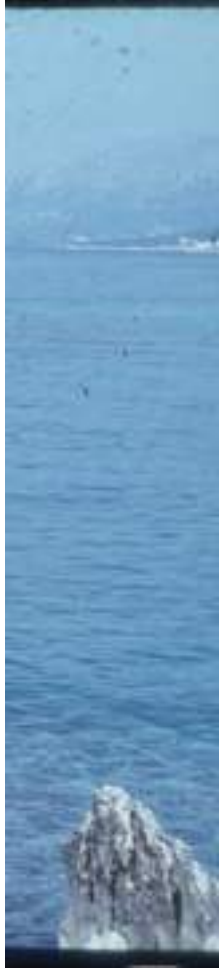
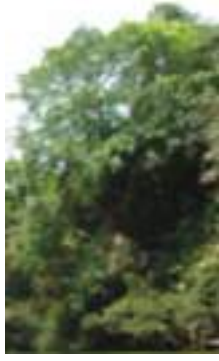
The at times bizarre forgotten history reads like an escape metaphor for the communist era. However, the Czechoslovak government seriously considered carrying out this plan.

CARLOS MOTTA, NEFANDUS, 2013



ADELA BABANOVA, RETURN TO ADRIAPORT, 2013





SONG TA, WORKS, 2009-2013



ANNIE KEVANS, BENITO MUSSOLINI, ITALY, 2004



ÓSCAR MUÑOZ, RE/TRATO, 2004



ZACHARY FORMWALT, IN PLACE OF CAPITAL, 2009



The economist Karel Žlábek peddled his maritime vision for years. In the second half of the 1970s he found a willing ear with the party leadership who commissioned a Prague company to investigate the tunnel.

The *Margret* collection tells a secret history of a very different order. Margret was the secretary of Günter K., a director of a construction company in Cologne. The two had an extramarital affair for about a year. In that short time, Günter collected a Samsonite suitcase full of mementos. The suitcase has recently been handed over from an heirless estate to the Susanne Zander gallery.



Many of the mementos from the suitcase are of the kind you would expect from old holiday albums: postcards, restaurant bills, candy wrappers, brochures from castles and hotels. The bulk of it is made up of snapshots of Margret, where she poses before the same castles, hotels and beautiful views that they visit.

In addition to the holiday snaps and mementos, the collection also includes more intimate souvenirs: pieces of nails, pubic hair and an empty strip from the contraceptive pill. They accompany a series of photographs in which Margret poses in ways that go beyond the genre of holiday snaps, half-naked in bed or showing her underpants with legs slightly apart, a bit lusty but not too risqué, since the photographs had to be taken to the developer before Günter could see them.



MARGRET, AUGUST, 1970, GÜNTER K.'S 'MARGRET' COLLECTION



KOKI TANAKA, PRECARIOUS TASKS #3: WALK FROM A CITY CENTER TO ITS SUBURBS, 2012

Up to this point, we are amused by the reason for this collection: Günter and Margret enjoying erotic trips to the usual resorts. To prolong his pleasure, Günter started a collection.

The amusement turns into slight aversion with the series of obsessive notes that Günter also left behind. Mostly typed on index cards and stationery from Günter's construction company, he describes in an official but compelling tone the most intimate details of their love live, along with Margret's sexual relationship with her husband, her menstrual cycle and her former love life.



BILL BRITANNIQUE, SEPTEMBER 5, 1970, GÜNTER K.'S 'MARGRET' COLLECTION

HOTEL CAFE RESTAURANT
 Tel. 10 43 00 1 99 81 - TELEFON 4
 Boulevard de la Chapelle - 1050 Paris

„Britannique“
 5. Sept 70

MASTRICHT

NOTA v.

*De l'après
 midi 24,00*

NOTATION CARD, NOVEMBER 3, 1970, GÜNTER K.'S 'MARGRET' COLLECTION

Dienstag, 3. Nov. 1970
 Um 16 Uhr + 50 km, mit Feldmeister und 2 Steuers.
 Ist am 17. Nov. um 11 Uhr in der H. fotografiert in der
 Küche bei der Zubereitung und beim Essen. Günter trübt
 sich mit weißen Pullover.
 Joseph D. wurde getrunken und ins Bett.
 Die Frau Pullover und 20 km, die der Mann der Frau alte
 Hände statt von der Frau. Mittwoch, 4. 11. 70
 wurde die die Tage begonnen. Sonntag, 5. 11. 70 ist
 die erste Zille wieder durch den Mann.
 Vergrüßelt lange und grüßig. Zwei Mädchen und Special
 tags. Größte geglaubt, die weißen sehr gutter und
 bewegt sehr heftig den Unterleib, jedoch in sich ganz
 zusammen mit ihr in Bett war, wurde es schwierig.
 Joseph nach dem Mann und schenken und zum Mann aus
 dem Bett (Güter von Margret 11. 11. 70 Dienstag)
 Montag wurde geschick von N. von dem gelben Intensi
 Strumpfhose und Blasen an. Väterer Pullover und 20
 Minuten in die Nacht mit
 zum die Strumpfhose Hilferichte und zur Frau. Dienstag
 nach um mit Luther der sich nicht weil. Die Frau
 geglaubt wurde (K. umbrach, 1970) N. ist sehr zugehen

CARLOS MOTTA, NEFANDUS, 2013



MARGRET, SEPTEMBER 5, 1970, GÜNTER K.'S 'MARGRET' COLLECTION



The snapshots and documents make us into voyeurs of an intimate game. A fragment of history, whose appeal derives perhaps in part from its many gaps. We miss the beginning and ending of the affair. Of Margret, we only know what is conveyed to us in the notes and photographs. Günter remains mostly hidden. We read the texts, compare them with the photographs and try to get to know Margret. Does she notice his obsession? What does she think? What happened to the two of them? Why did Günter keep this material until his death? Questions to which we will never know the answers.

Oscar Muñoz's *Re/trato* shows us how difficult it is to hold on to even our own reality. He paints his self-portrait with water on warm cement. The strokes disappear a few seconds after he makes them, pushing the artist to race against time to complete the portrait. It is the Sisyphean task of crafting a moving portrait; a face that appears and disappears time and again.



KOKI TANAKA, PRECARIOUS TASKS #3: WALK FROM A CITY CENTER TO ITS SUBURBS, 2012

ÓSCAR MUÑOZ, RE/TRATO, 2004



ADELA BABANOVA, RETURN TO ADRIAPORT, 2013



ANNIE KEVANS, SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC, SERBIA, 2004



ÓSCAR MUÑOZ, RE/TRATO, 2004



CARLOS MOTTA, NEFANDUS, 2013



The hypnotic work symbolises the process of memory. We manage to call to mind pieces of the past only to lose them again immediately. Thus, history is a patchwork of often ephemeral and incomplete images, with which we try to save the past from oblivion.

One of these incomplete images is a photo taken in 1845 by Henry Fox Talbot of the then recently completed Royal Exchange in London. The photograph is central to Zachary Formwalt's *In Place of Capital*. The new medium of photography promised to capture reality exactly. But due to the slow

ANNIE KEVANS, MOHAMED SUHARTO, INDONESIA, 2004



ANNIE KEVANS, NE WIN, BURMA, 2004

ANNIE KEVANS, FRANCOIS DUVALIER, HAITI, 2004



ANNIE KEVANS, NGO DINH DIEM, VIETNAM, 2004





shutter speed, the moving human figures were blotted. Formwalt concludes that this failure of photography shows a remarkable similarity with the character of industrial society as noted by Karl Marx, in which money rather than labour determines the value of something. The disconnecting of money and labour illustrates the transitory capitalist system.

What do we learn from these forgotten, lost or incomplete stories? Of this denial of violence, deeply buried secrets, reversal of values and washed-away sins? That the past is just as changeable and fleeting as the present? That we cannot solidify our histories due to our changing morals?

ÓSCAR MUÑOZ, RE/TRATO, 2004



ANNIE KEVANS, ADOLF HITLER, GERMANY, 2004



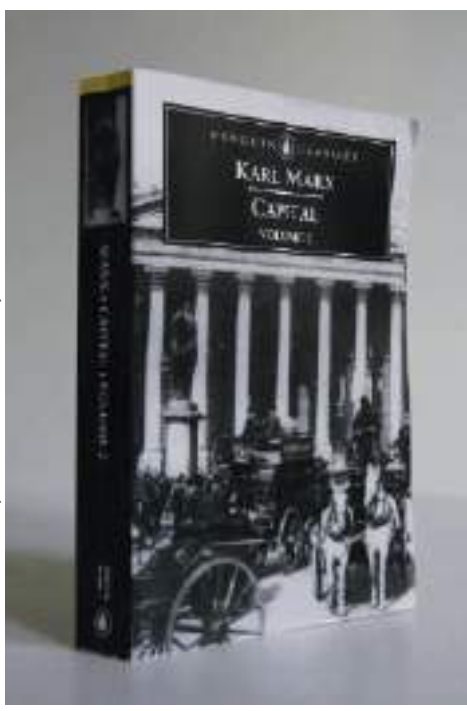
ÓSCAR MUÑOZ, RE/TRATO, 2004



ÓSCAR MUÑOZ, RE/TRATO, 2004



ZACHARY FORMWALT, IN PLACE OF CAPITAL, 2009



ADELA BABANOVA, RETURN TO ADRIAPORT, 2013



ANNIE KEVANS, POL POT, CAMBODIA, 2004



Koki Tanaka suggests an alternative form of writing history. He wants to recapture the past. Not by writing or filming history, or catching it in sound, but by embodying it. In his series *Precarious Tasks*, a group of people is engaged in performing simple tasks. They model clay, sit at the piano or write poems. It looks a bit like they are in group therapy. Yet, the artist focuses here on rediscovering everyday habits that were disrupted by disaster.

KOKI TANAKA, PRECARIOUS TASKS #3: WALK FROM A CITY CENTER TO ITS SUBURBS, 2012





KOKI TANAKA, PRECARIOUS TASKS #8: GOING HOME COULD NOT BE DAILY ROUTINE, 2014



MARGRET, AUGUST 1970, GÜNTER K.'S 'MARGRET' COLLECTION



ÓSCAR MUÑOZ, RE/TRATO, 2004



ADELA BABANOVA, RETURN TO ADRIAPORT, 2013



KOKI TANAKA, PRECARIOUS TASKS #8: GOING HOME COULD NOT BE DAILY ROUTINE, 2014



ADELA BABANOVA, RETURN TO ADRIAPORT, 2013

In *Precarious Tasks #3* and *#8*, Tanaka shows two variations of the simple fact that following a disaster, people have to find a new way home. We've all seen them: the flow of pedestrians on the Brooklyn Bridge escaping from the burning World Trade Center towers, the residents of New Orleans returning after hurricane Katrina.

Precarious Tasks #3 shows the route the artist made on foot in the tracks of a friend he had navigated home via Twitter after the Tokyo earthquake.

Precarious Tasks #8 shows a similar series of re-enactments of London residents who had to find a safe route home during the widespread riots of 2011.

Walks to recapture everyday knowledge, to re-embody the past in the present, not to repeat history but to restore it.



ANNIE KEVANS, ANTE PAVELIC, CROATIA, 2004



CARLOS MOTTA, NEFANDUS, 2013

CONTRACEPTIVE PILL STRIP, SEPTEMBER 6, 1970, GÜNTER K.'S 'MARGRET' COLLECTION



ÓSCAR MUÑOZ, RE/TRATO, 2004



ANNIE KEVANS, JORGE RAFAEL VIDELA, ARGENTINA, 2004



CARLOS MOTTA, NEFANDUS, 2013

ÓSCAR MUÑOZ

Re/trato, 2004,
single-channel video projection 4:3,
28 minutes

In Óscar Muñoz's body of work the boundaries between photography, printing techniques, drawings, installations, video and sculpture disappear. In *Re/trato*, which means both portrait and retreatment, Muñoz examines the ability of images to retain memories. The artist tirelessly paints his facial features, but the medium of water on the surface of cement warmed by the sun makes this impossible. Just like a fleeting memory, the self-portrait is never visible in its entirety and the drawing continuously appears and disappears. The tenacity of the act, however, seems to oppose the idea of transience and oblivion.

Fundido a blanco (Fade to White), 2011,
single-channel video HD, 7:40 minutes

Fundido a Blanco is an intimate family portrait. The artist films his father for nearly eight minutes with a camera on a tripod. Shimmering on the window is a reflection of a photograph of his mother. The two faces contrast indistinctly against the bright, white light, causing the image to appear fleeting and ethereal. It is a reference to the bright midday sun in Muñoz's hometown of Cali, Colombia, which shines so fiercely that it fragments the view. The camera records how his father keeps blinking and fights against sleep. The fragile character of this portrait is characteristic of Muñoz's art, where transience and memories are captured poetically.

Óscar Muñoz (Colombia, 1951) lives and works in Cali, Colombia. His work is included in collections such as the Tate Modern (London) and the MoMA (New York). He is the founder of the cultural centre and artist residency programme 'Lugar a dudas' in Cali. Muñoz received the Prince Claus Award in 2013.

GERT JAN KOCKEN

Tibbets' Cloud, 2010,
C-print, 245 x 180 cm

Tibbets' Re-enactment (fragment ABC News, October 1976), 2010, 5 minutes

Gert Jan Kocken examines the memory and visual representation of important events in world history. The collective memory of a world war or global

catastrophe consists of perception formed by mass media and official historiography. Kocken's work offers alternative narratives. On 6 August 1945, Colonel Paul Tibbets flew the plane that dropped the destructive atomic bomb on Hiroshima. He named the plane after his mother, Enola Gay. Like a real movie star, he signed postcards into his old age. He also performed in a re-enactment of the bombing.

Gert Jan Kocken (the Netherlands, 1971) is a visual artist who lives and works in Amsterdam. He graduated from the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague in 1998 and the Rijksacademie (National Academy) in Amsterdam in 2011. His work has been exhibited widely and can be found in numerous Dutch museum collections.

Courtesy Stedelijk Museum Schiedam

CARLOS MOTTA

Nefandus, 2013,
HD video 16:9, 13:04 minutes

Amongst the pristine beauty of the Colombian Caribbean landscape, two men search for traces of pre-colonial traditions and undocumented stories. *Nefandus* has a contemplative and mysterious character enhanced by the spoken texts based on historical documents. The film is part of a trilogy in which artist Carlos Motta reflects on how colonialism in South America stigmatised sexuality and homoeroticism. Spanish conquerors imposed a Christian sexual morality on the indigenous people in the Americas and condemned sodomy. Harsh punishments were handed out for these 'Pecados Nefandos' – unspeakable sins. *Nefandus* searches for stories and the image of desire before they were manipulated and created by European epistemological categories.

Carlos Motta (1978, Colombia) is a multi-disciplinary artist whose work focuses on the political history of suppressed communities and identities. Motta participated in the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program and received a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship and various grants including Art Matters and Creative Capital. Motta teaches at a number of art academies in the United States.

GÜNTER K., MARGRET

Collection of photographs, documents
and paraphernalia, 1969–1970

From May 1969 to December 1970, the 37-year-old businessman Günter K. from Cologne comprehensively documented his love affair with his 24-year-old secretary Margret. Hundreds of colour and black-and-white photographs, found in a suitcase when clearing an apartment, show Margret posing casually in a variety of locations. Smoking in the car or lying in bed, she looks directly into the camera. Typed documents accurately report their love life: they describe very briefly the locations, positions and duration of the sex. It has become an extensive archive supplemented with receipts, bills, strands of head and pubic hair and empty contraceptive packets. It appears to have to prove Günter's obsessive love for Margret and turns the observer into a voyeur.

Courtesy Delmes & Zander / Galerie
Susanne Zander

SONG TA

Names of my Papa and Mama, 2014,
wall drawing

Chinese parents are resourceful when it comes to circumventing the one-child policy. The Chinese artist Song Ta was born as the second child. His parents forbade him from calling them 'daddy' and 'mummy' and continuously fabricated other names and forms of address. He kept a list over the years of all these names. There appears to be a hidden social criticism behind Song Ta's seemingly innocent work. His conceptual installations, videos and performances examine the boundaries of political power in public life and in art institutes that propagate a false freedom. Drawing from his own life experiences or from stories from his circle of acquaintances, Song Ta explores in his work the grey areas of Chinese society and the art world.

Song Ta (China, 1988) works and lives in Guangzhou. He has several solo exhibitions in Beijing and Guangzhou to his name. His most recent exhibitions are 'ON I OFF: China's Young Artists in Concept and Practice', UCCA, Beijing (2013) and 'CAFAM Future in the Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Beijing (2012).

ADELA BABANOVA

Return to Adriaport, 2013,
single-channel video, 14:23 minutes

In *Return to Adriaport*, Adela Babanova combines true facts with fictional and estranging elements. In the late 1960's, Czech professor Karel Žlábek designed the ambitious Adriaport project: a plan for a long train tunnel from Czechoslovakia to the Adriatic coast and a futuristic design of an artificial island. It would be a refuge for the inhabitants of the then communist Czechoslovakia. The plan died on the drawing board. Babanova's work shows the notional developments of the project based on a collage of computer-animated images, archival recordings, photographs and simulated interviews.

Adela Babanova (Czechoslovakia, 1980) graduated in 2006 from The Department of New Media, Printmaking and Conceptual Art at the Art Academy in Prague. In her films, Babanova combines television and radio techniques with photography and 3D animation. She often works with a fixed crew of scriptwriters, camera people, editors and artists. Her work has been shown in places such as the LOOP Festival in Barcelona and in the ZAHORIAN&co GALLERY in Bratislava.

ZACHARY FORMWALT

In Place of Capital, 2009,
HD video, 24:30 minutes

How do you capture the flow of money in an image? In *In Place of Capital*, Zachary Formwalt explores his fascination with today's economy and the stock market. He tries to give form to these intangible ideas and processes in his work, of which the results are visible and tangible but the inner workings remain hidden. The basis of this work is a group of photographs of the Royal Exchange in London created by pioneer photographer William Henry Fox Talbot in 1845. At that time, the technology was not able to bring people and moving objects into sharp focus; pedestrians and moving vehicles appeared as faint smudges. In Formwalt's film, the historical images serve as metaphor for the ephemeral nature of the modern economy.

Zachary Formwalt (USA, 1979) lives and works in Amsterdam. He graduated from the School of Art Institute of Chicago in 2001 and obtained his Master of Fine Arts from Northwestern University in Evanston Illinois in 2003. In 2008-2009, he was

resident at the Rijksacademie in Amsterdam. His work has been exhibited in museums including the Kunsthalle Basel and the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

ANNIE KEVANS

Boys, 2004, oil on paper,
29 portraits, 50 x 40 cm

In her work, Kevans often examines the constructed identity of well-known individuals such as those of (child) celebrities or mistresses of American presidents. For this series of portraits, she studied childhood photographs and other archival material of infamous dictators of the 20th century. Her evocation of the idealised image of the innocent child portrait that, since Victorian times, has always been displayed with big eyes and full cheeks, causes a dilemma for the viewer. Does he believe in the innocence of the child, or does he see the portrait as a facade for the cruelty of the adult hiding behind the portrait?

Annie Kevans (France, 1972) lives and works in London. Her paintings show her interest in power, manipulation and the role of the individual. Since her graduation from the Central St. Martins School of Art & Design London in 2004, Kevans has had several solo exhibitions in New York, London and Vienna.

Courtesy Saatchi Gallery, London

KOKI TANAKA

Precarious Tasks #3: Walk from a city center to its suburbs, 2012

Precarious Tasks #8: Going home could not be daily routine, 2014

1. 25:20 minutes
2. 09:22 minutes
3. 27:46 minutes
4. 46:35 minutes
5. (Interviews) 07:22 minutes

Shortly after the great Tohoku earthquake on 11 March 2011, a friend of the artist Koki Tanaka found herself far away from home in Tokyo. The subway system was shut down and she had a four-hour walk ahead. Tanaka located her via Twitter and Google maps, and kept her spirits up while she was finding her way. Eighteen months later, he walked the same route and recorded his walk with these photographs. The title of the work, *Precarious Tasks #3*, refers

to actions that are both precarious and uncertain. Tanaka has created a number of these in the last few years. They create awareness of human behaviour within a group, often in response to a particular location, context or event. The tasks raise important questions about what a moment of collectivity is all about and how individuals act in such moments. *Precarious Tasks #8* is based on the same intention as the walk in Tokyo. Tanaka asked four London residents to recreate their journey home during the London riots of 2011.

Koki Tanaka (Japan, 1975) lives and works in Los Angeles. By using a wide range of media such as video, photography, site-specific installations and interventions, Tanaka tries to re-invent and visualise everyday actions and human behaviour. Tanaka represented Japan in the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013.

Marres is a House for Contemporary Culture located in the heart of the old town of Maastricht. Marres develops with artists, musicians, designers, chefs, and perfumers, a new vocabulary for the senses. In addition to bringing a lively program of exhibitions, presentations and performances, Marres also features a beautiful garden and a wonderful restaurant.

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Images: Courtesy of the artists,
Stedelijk Museum Schiedam and
Delmes & Zander / Galerie Susanne
Zander
Graphic design: Vandejong /
Lucie Pindat, Gabrielle Pauty

Texts: Valentijn Byvanck (essay),
Elvie Casteleijn (lemma's)
Editing: Joyce Larue, Valentijn
Byvanck, Renée Roukens
Translation: Language Unlimited
Printer: Lecturis

Marres receives structural support
from the Ministry of Education,
Culture and Science, the Municipality
of Maastricht, and the Province of
Limburg.

