

Press release

'Alter Heroes Coalition'

Group exhibition featuring: Tomaso Binga, Leah Capaldi, Cibelle Cavalli Bastos, Gery Georgieva, Yolanda López, Kent Monkman & Gisèle Gordon, Adrian Piper, Tabita Rezaire, Super Sohrab and Super Taus

Opening: 21 September 2018, 6:30–8:30pm

7:30pm Sonja Khalecallon receives guests Vera Modena and Super Taus for an intergalactic hang out at *Las Venus Resort Palace Hotel*, a multi dimensional science-fiction environment by Cibelle Cavalli Bastos.

Dates: 22 September – 15 December 2018

Address: Mimosa House, 12 Princes Street, London, W1B2LL

The group exhibition 'Alter Heroes Coalition' presents a selection of artworks which explore the concept of an alter ego. The artists included in the show reinvent themselves as unconventional and empowering heroes reflecting on cultural displacement, belonging and unbecoming. The show exposes the constructed nature of identity and challenges gendered behaviours by embracing the polyvalence of reinvented personas.

The exhibition title marks the first step in Super Taus's intent to form a Super Heroes Coalition – a community of every day super heroes who support each other and unite to achieve a common goal.

Super Taus is a woman with super powers from Dagestan, a southern republic in Russia. Her deeds (or as she refers to them "life affirming practices") go practically unnoticed, captured by random video registrators. She can move rocks, bend metal, and carry heavy sculptures across continents in order to celebrate forgotten heroes.

Super Taus appeared after Taus Makhacheva met Sohrab Kashani and his alter ego Super Sohrab - a part-time super hero who while embracing his failed (in gender normative terms) masculinity, attempts to fix local and global issues, such as US sanctions on Iran, visa complications and air pollution.

Also tackling the construction of masculinity and heroism, Leah Capaldi's new commissioned work features a hero of a classic Hollywood western alongside an intimate portrait of her father explaining his passion for guns.

Kent Monkman's drag alter ego, Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, pays tribute to the Two Spirit tradition in Native American culture that recognizes an ambiguous third gender. The film *Iskootāo* documents Miss Chief Testickle dancing on a billion-year-old fragment of the Canadian shield, weighing 600 tons, in a symbolic act of land reclaiming.

Vera Modena, the pop star alter-ego of Gery Georgieva is exaggeratedly feminine and overwhelmingly authentic. Vera is an assemblage of failed archetypes: beauty queen, dancefloor diva, fertile goddess and madonna lacrimosa. Gery ceremonially ended the life of Vera Modena whilst on stage in 2016, here she will appear as a resurrection in the *Las Venus Resort Hotel* for the opening night of the exhibition.

Cibelle Cavalli Bastos's alter ego Sonja Khalecallon is a multi-tasking cosmic healer, social parasite, exotic dancer, cabaret performer and manicurist, whose home is an abandoned Las Vegas hotel in a dystopian future. Sonja Khalecallon performs femininity to the point of short-circuit, breakage, and collapse in durational dystopian performances within speculative retro-futuristic narratives that deal in gender, gender performance, gentrification, ecology and imposed and perceived realities.

Tabita Rezaire's *Inner Fire* series of self-portraits represent different archetypes of black womxn as regards race, sex, spirituality, technology and capital. The artist's work challenges oppressive colonial narratives, and proposes healing methods as a means of reinventing collective identities.

In a series of performative self-portraits, or *Tableaux vivants*, dating to 1978, Yolanda Lopez incarnates the Virgin of Guadalupe, a powerful symbol of Mexican identity and faith. The artist claims the image of the contemporary Madonna for her own personal story of being a working-class Chicana woman.

In 1973, Adrian Piper created a male alter ego, the Mythic Being, who became the basis of a pioneering series of performances and photo-based works. Piper transformed herself into the Mythic Being by sporting an Afro wig, sunglasses and a moustache and adopting behaviour conventionally identified as masculine.

Tomaso Binga appropriated this masculine name as an artistic pseudonym in early 1970s to question male privilege in the art world. Bianca Menna and

her male alter ego, Tomaso Binga, were united in a sensational marriage ceremony in 1978, symbolizing the act of becoming wedded to art itself.

Notes to editors:

About the artists:

Tomaso Binga/Bianca Menna (b. 1931, Salerno, Italy) is a multidisciplinary artist and one of the leading figures in visual poetry. She was a Professor of Theory and Method of Mass Media at the Academy of Fine Arts in Frosinone. During her prolific career, she has participated in exhibitions, festivals and performances throughout Italy and internationally. She has also participated in the 38th Venice Biennale, the 14th Sao Paulo Biennial, and the International Art Festival in Lyon.

Leah Capaldi (b. 1985, Chertsey, UK) lives and works in London. She holds an MA in Sculpture, Royal College of Art (2010). Recent solo exhibitions and performances include: *Lay Down*, Matt's Gallery, London (2016); *Overlay*, ICA, London (2015); *Hung*, Serpentine Gallery, London (2014); *Allure*, Perf4m ARTISSIMA, Turin, Italy (2014); *Invites*, Zabłudowicz Collection, London (2012). Recent group shows include: *Obeying Durations*, 16 Nicolson Street, Glasgow (2018); *On Board*, Crispr, Bogota, Columbia (2018); *FRIEZE Night*, David Roberts Art Foundation, London (2011); and *New Contemporaries* (2011), London and Sheffield. Leah Capaldi is represented by Matt's Gallery, London.

Cibelle Cavalli Bastos (b. 1978, São Paulo, Brazil) lives and works between London, Berlin and São Paulo. They received an MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art in 2015. Their work addresses the deconstruction and formation of identities and what stands in between the self and presence as our complexities interact with each other and our surroundings. Cibelle Cavalli Bastos has released four music albums and has performed and presented work in Martin Gropius Bau, Museo Reina Sofia Madrid, ICA London, Carnegie Hall New York, Serpentine Marathon, 28th and 31st São Paulo Biennial among others.

Gery Georgieva (b. 1986, Varna, Bulgaria) lives and works in London. She is a recent graduate from the Royal Academy Schools, London and studied Fine Art/History of Art at Goldsmiths College, London. Previous solo projects include *Ha Чешмата* (At the Source) performance commission for

Block Universe 2018, *The Blushing Valley*, Swimming Pool, Sofia (2017); *Polythene Queen*, Hunter/Whitfield, London (2017); and *Solo Romantika*, Res., London (2015). Selected group exhibitions include: *Mademoiselle*, Musée Centre Régional d'Art Contemporain - Occitanie, Sète 2018, *ripe*, Kingsgate Projects, London; *No Place to Spit*, SET space, London, both 2017.

Gisèle Gordon lives and works in Toronto, Canada. Gisèle directed and produced the feature-length documentary *The Tunguska Project* (Hot Docs 2005, Best Feature Length Film at the Planet in Focus Film Festival, 2005). She also directed several short works including *Girls With Opinions*, 2001, (Images Festival 2002, Better Worlds: Activist and Utopian Projects by Artsits, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, Ontario, 2002, Fugitive Images: Global Visions, Art Gallery of Edmonton, 2003). Gisele formed the partnership Urban Nation with Cree media artist Kent Monkman in 1996.

Yolanda López (b. 1942, San Diego, California) is a painter, printmaker, educator, video artist, curator and activist whose work challenges ethnic stereotypes of Mexican Americans. She received her MFA from University of California, San Diego in 1979. Her work has been shown in many institutions including the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego; San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art; National Museum of Mexican Art, Chicago; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and Brooklyn Museum, New York.

Kent Monkman (b. 1965) is a Canadian First Nations artist of Cree and Irish ancestry who lives and works in Toronto, Canada. He has had solo exhibitions at numerous Canadian museums including the Montreal Museum of Fine Art, the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art in Toronto, the Winnipeg Art Gallery, and the Art Gallery of Hamilton. Group exhibitions include *The American West*, Compton Verney, Warwickshire, England; *Remember Humanity*, Witte de With, Rotterdam; and the 2010 Sydney Biennale.

Adrian Piper (b.1948, New York) is an American conceptual artist and analytic philosopher. For her artwork Piper has received Guggenheim, AVA, and NEA Fellowships, as well as the Skowhegan Medal for Sculptural Installation and the New York Dance & Performance Award for Installation & New Media. In 2002, she founded the Adrian Piper Research Archive (APRA) which has been located in Berlin, Germany since 2005. Piper's artwork is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Centre Pompidou, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Generali Foundation, and the Museum of Contemporary Art of Los Angeles, among others.

Tabita Rezaire (b.1989, Paris; based in Cayenne, French Guyana) is a video artist, technology researcher and agent of healing. She holds a Bachelor in Economics (Paris) and a Master in Artist Moving Image from Central Saint Martins College (London). Selected exhibitions include *Riding Infinity*, PSM, Berlin (2018); *Exotic Trade*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (2017); *Post-Cyber Feminist International*, ICA, London (2017); Performa 17, NY (2017).

Super Sohrab/Sohrab Kashani (b. 1989, Tehran, Iran) is an interdisciplinary artist and an independent curator based in Tehran. Kashani has exhibited internationally and has held talks at institutions and universities worldwide including: Asia Society, New York; Tisch School of the Arts NYU, New York; Stanford University, Palo Alto; University of California, Irvine; Delfina Foundation, London; Gasworks, London; Haus am Waldsee, Berlin; YARAT, Baku; and Global Art Forum (Art Dubai), Dubai.

Super Taus (b. 1983, Tsada Mountain village, Russia) lives and works in Tsada Mountain village and graduated from the Department of Philology at the Dagestan Pedagogical State University. Super Taus was awarded the young artist of the year Kandinsky Prize in 2016. Recent group exhibitions include *Cloud Caught on a Mountain*, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow (2017); *Second World, Third Attempt*, Leo Xu Projects, Shanghai (2017); *Museum ON / OFF*, National Museum of Modern Art - Pompidou Centre, Paris, (2016) *VII Permanent collection display interaction: Contemporary Artists Respond to MMOMA Collection*, MMOMA, Moscow (2016); *Vababai Vadadai! **, narrative projects, London (2015).

About Mimosa House:

Mimosa House is non-profit project space that opened in Mayfair in September 2017, dedicated to supporting international female and queer artists.

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