

## **Judith Wielander on Vroom by Elen Braga**

Walking through the park the weekend of 15 -16 September, what strikes immediately people's attention is an exuberant billboard that represents a young woman lying back on a two-sided velo-mobile surrounded by a soft red lightning, a mise en scene that recalls immediately the 90's. What we see is a self-portrait of the artist Elen Braga with the fifth version of a bike prototype, she developed and constructed during her research year at a.pass. The work has taken inspiration from a self-portrait of her father, sitting on his Suzuki GSX – R1000, hand built over years following an online instruction manual in French. While her father was reproducing the engine to access the Brazil moto club, Elen's childish body was re-shaped for winning the title of the beauty pageant contest 'Mini Baby Ceará 90 Brazil'. Objectification of woman's body melted to politics of neo-liberal progress and colonisation - 'bodies', like "engines" can be amateurishly de-constructed and reconstructed, controlled, manipulated for the rise of new myths and narrations in the name of social emancipation.

The artist re-enacts her father's—our patriarchal 'myth'—through doing and undoing, learning and unlearning, acting while addressing aesthetics and politics.

This very personal research finds a more collective frame in a series of public intervention, 'Hang out' (2017) in the neighborhood of Molenbeek, and 'Parade' (2018) at ZSenne Artlab/ a.pass Research Centre. Elen Braga provokes an interaction with a wider community, using bicycle prototypes as a meeting place between artistic and political - political here is understood as a transformation of the sensory fabric of the 'being together'. Hypatia Vourloumis refers to 'performance scapes', landscapes of time and place not as a priori fields where actions can take place, but as a reconfigured and reconstructed landscapes, ephemerally generated and formed through artistic, political gestures.

Traces of these performative actions lead us in the park to another fragment of VROOM. Immeasurable Results #2 is an interactive sound installation inspired by Lynn Randolph's oil painting "Immeasurable Results" (1994) made by a transparent 40m2 bubble and eight sculptures. The sculptures are motorcycle helmets modified and moulded in polyester with the intent of enabling the visiting body to lie down. Each helmet is equipped by a communication system which connects all the participants. Lying down, free of our physical weight, we can improvise and share a collective narrative that reminds experiences of "learning" without a prescribed master-student relationship.

### **A.pass End-Communication reflections**

This text was written on the basis of the End-Communication of the researcher, the portfolio reflecting her/his trajectory at a.pass and a discussion with the Visitors. The visitors were Elke Van Campenhout (artist and researcher in the field of spirituality and philosophy), Judith Wielander (independent curator focusing on the intersection of art, politics and social engagement) and Lilia Mestre (a.pass artistic coordinator and co- curator). The research presentations took place Elizabeth Park - De Platoon the 14, 15, 16 September 2018 \*