

**RIE SNOBECK**  
Lee Gallery, London

beck is ambitious about the reach and the grasp of her audience. The artist's first solo presentation in the field, by way of elusive analogies, and availability of natural resources and aspects of wealth distribution. While the dimension of her work was evident in her first encounter with the duet formalism, its sensual merged more gradually, overturning stations. Exhibition had two main elements. Consisted of seven groups of colours transferred to sheets of plastic in layers of lamination and separation. Exactly to the wall so that to remove entail another act of stripping, which comprises six panels. In each of the sets, a single photograph, with tonal differences, on three panels the remaining panels feature *Jiminuendi* of a single colour. made up the second element. stools, collectively titled *Seeing the 4*, were placed at uneven intervals throughout the space with one adjacent to the window onto the street, as corresponding with the outside of each of the stools' raised seats sat on a red glass jug, assembled from broths with glue and sutures. With redundancy pointedly obliterated, the red melancholically beyond hope of containing contents securely. Elsewhere, instead a wall, was *Local/Non-Local* made up of 48 wooden dipsticks of lengths. The calibrated measurements missing from the upper part of the sticks, diminishing their value for others, while the row of top ends a linear graph of incremental sizes.

Painted panels set the aesthetic. The 'peels' are the product of separation of plastic by hand from the ink-jet print with which it has been bonded. The peel retains the original print on the reverse side, an area framed with fibres on which it has been sticking. The artist repeats the process twice more print; as progressively less care, greater care and physical effort to yield successively paler versions of the original image.

Additional pressure required by massive peel is as much a part of the printed detail. Wrinkles multiply in layers of later peels, registering the artist's intentions at the time of making. Each follows an identical pattern: the first image is top left; the second bottom right; and the third and final dictates a shift up to top middle. It is in these recurrent instances of gain and depletion is the inevitability of on and extinction. Snobeck's choices are deliberate. Between 1972 and 1975 in which public concern about the consequences of diminishing resources went mainstream – the US

Environmental Protection Agency's 'DOCUMERICA' project invited freelance photographers to roam the country capturing impressions of 'environmental happenings and non-happenings'. The six photographs selected here reflect the broad interpretations of the mission: a boy panning for gold; a smog-damaged plant; marine algae from a dumpsite; residents of a poor neighbourhood awaiting its demolition.

Gallery information shifted the register of engagement with the works, contextualizing the photographs by giving source and time, and identifying the jugs placed on the piano stools as the Depression Glass distributed free or at low cost as tableware to North American families impoverished by catastrophic pre-war recession. By adding a further reference – to an earlier era of economic crisis – this information risked straining rather than enriching the show's hypothesis about the universal perils of poorly managed resources. But it also drew the present day into the mix; the International Monetary Fund recently claimed that the wealth gap was as wide in western economies today as it was in 1929.

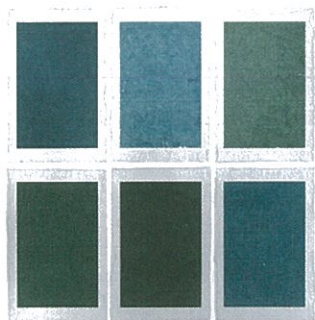
With names like *Skin Tight*, *Revolving Layers* (*Tongue Kissing*) and *Those Eyes* (all 2014), the peels communicate the symbiotic continuity between man and his natural surroundings, perceived as integral to a sustainable society: standing apart is not an option. The artist reinforced this view with the exhibition's title – 'Le monde, le continent, la France, etc..., etc..., la rue de Bizerte, moi.' (The World, The Continent, France, etc..., etc..., Bizerte Road, me) – a comment made by Gilles Deleuze in the section of his *Abécédaire* (a series of interviews filmed between 1988–89) in which he reflects on the priorities of the political left. With this comment, the philosopher placed himself firmly in the lineage of everyday political responsibility, reaching from the distant horizon and eventually down to him.

MARTIN HOLMAN

1  
Valerie Snobeck  
*Go Down with Flower*, 2014, peeled prints and burlap on plastic, 2.9 x 2.9 m

2  
Burak Delier  
*Songs of the Possessed*, 2014, video still

3  
Lorna Simpson  
*Momentum*, 2010, HD video, installation view, 2014



**BURAK DELIER**  
Iniva, London

In *Notes from my Mobile* (2012), Turkish artist Burak Delier reveals some of his personal and professional anxieties in the form of short video-diary entries. The artist stresses the need to be less pedantic and more productive; he asks himself whether making just five or six works a year is really enough. A level of uncertainty runs through many of Delier's pieces. At their centre is a continual questioning of artistic identity, often coupled with a collaborative approach to exploring the limits of creativity within the current political economy.

'Freedom Has no Script' – Delier's first solo exhibition in London – developed from the artist's thoughts about the Gezi Park protests erupting in Istanbul during the summer of 2013. Opposing the neoliberal privatization of city space and the increasingly authoritarian character of the current Turkish government, the protest movement represented spontaneity and improvisation rather than the construction of an alternative political apparatus. The artist likewise forgoes the scripting of political alternatives and instead explores concepts of freedom through engaging with workers subservient to commercial industries of all kinds. In *The Deal* (2013), for example, Delier conducted an experiment with a freelance trader, who sees his independent practice as avoiding 'work'. Delier's Istanbul gallery secured a 5000TL (approximately £1,500) bank loan, which was then invested with the proviso that the trader could keep the entire amount if he managed to make a profit equivalent to 18 months' interest (5918,22TL or about £1,700) over a period of 20 working days. His collaborator's success meant that the visual documentation – including the video, diagrams, and contracts also on display at Iniva – had to be sold by the gallery in order to pay off the loan.

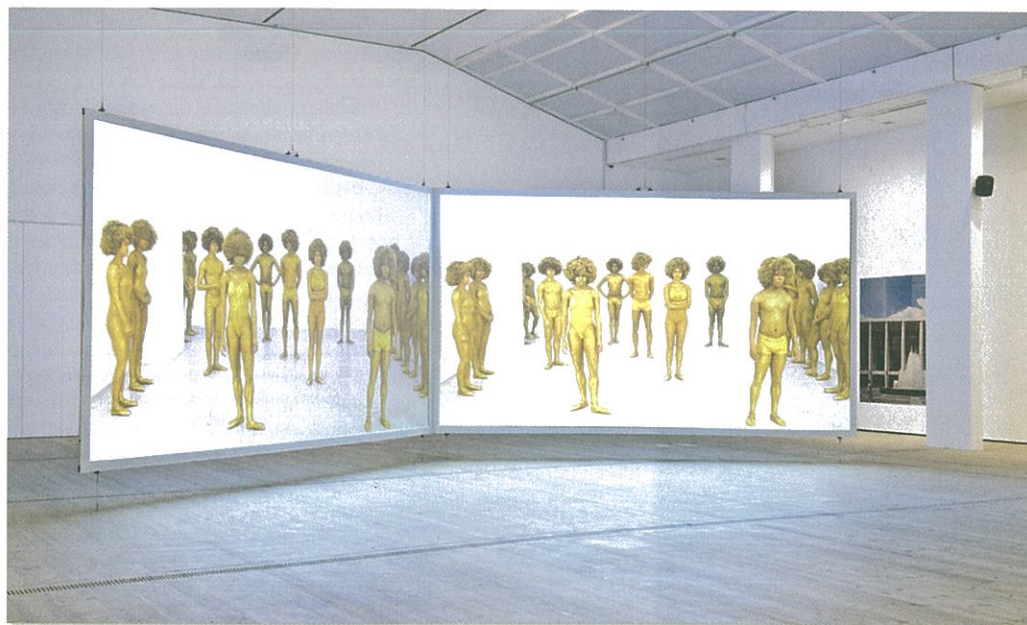
*Collector's Wish* (2012) takes the form of an entire wall painted red. A video shows Delier listening to a collector's desire to have a memorable childhood poem visually realized. Here, Delier is subject to the will of his patron, reframing the artist/collector relationship in the stark terms of capitalism's conventional contractual obligations. Certainly, in the artist's native Istanbul, an almost-total absence of state funding for the arts necessitates an atavistic reliance on private patronage and commercial galleries, potentially restricting artistic freedoms and limiting criticality. The poem itself reveals a cyclical satire: To keep up with society fashion, an Anatolian gentleman commissions an artist to paint a mural depicting Moses' parting of the Red Sea. The monochromatic red wall that results, however,

is a far cry from the gentleman's original expectations, reflecting the disjunction between the artist's creative freedom and the patron's perspective on artistic merit.

In two recent large-scale video works, white-collar Turkish workers participate in psychological exercises. In *Crisis and Control* (2013), participants describe previous aspirations and current disillusionments while performing yoga in generic office environments. Over 14 minutes, the art work reveals itself as a kind of absurdist theatre crossed with an essay film. Yoga exercises oriented towards the attainment of inner peace appear offset by the anxious meditations of the post-Fordist worker – an inconsistency perhaps also evident in the corporate appropriation of such spiritual practices, which are offered to groups of employees with the promise of greater physical and mental well-being. In Delier's video, participants are far from exuberant with motivation, instead recounting desires to be more creative and expressing dissatisfaction with current labour conditions. In *Songs of the Possessed* (2014), newly commissioned by Iniva, paid professional actors and volunteer office workers shuffle amongst one another, taking turns to vent their anger or practice sympathy face-to-face. Levels of enthusiasm appear to fluctuate with each new partnership. With participants stripped of both individual and vocational identities, performance here is equated with the standardized behaviour demanded by the corporate setting.

In many works, Delier orchestrates an environment in which individual identities are bound to ossify. Whilst potentially restrictive, market logic is also productive for the artist in so far as it determines both the subject and form of his work, as in certain earlier conceptual works by Billy Apple, Marcel Broodthaers and Hans Haacke, among others. Yet the various social actors represented in 'Freedom Has no Script' reveal broader conflicts of desire within the political economy writ large, where the pervasive demands of commercial activity delimit expression both in and beyond the parameters of contemporary art.

TOM SNOW



UK

**LORNA SIMPSON**  
Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead

Overlooking Newcastle, a city full of architectural disjunctions that add up to something self-possessed, if unresolved, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art feels like the right setting for the reversals and displacements of Lorna Simpson's first European retrospective. The gallery's industrial spaces are generous, allowing for some minor tweaks from the show's previous presentations at Haus der Kunst, Munich, and Jeu de Paume, Paris, the latter of which notably earned the artist a nomination for this year's Deutsche Börse Photography Prize.

Though neither chronological nor exhaustive, the show begins with her earliest image/text works of the 1980s. *Gestures/Reenactments* (1985) is made up of six photographs, each of a black male figure cropped in various poses from thighs to shoulders. He faces the camera front on only in the final shot, lips set and arms crossed, eyes lost below the top of the frame. The seven text panels below are too many to allow neat pairings, and the careful positioning and fragmented sentences are too elusive to be narrative, resisting a straightforward reading. The disjunction between text and image functions similarly in *Twenty Questions (A Sampler)* (1986) and *Five Day Forecast* (1988). Such surreal vignettes are starting points for Simpson's continued reflections on perception and identity.

Almost 30 years on, the ambiguity of the figures in Simpson's image/text work from this period – all dressed in loose white clothing that can't be reconciled with fashion trends – together with nebulous language and heavy, well-made frames and text panels, lend these pieces an iconic confidence.

More recently, Simpson has been working with found photographs. In *1957–2009 Interiors* (2009) the artist draws from an anonymous collection of over 200 images that she found online. They show an African-American woman striking glamorous poses for the camera in

various settings in postwar Los Angeles. Simpson choreographed these mysterious performances by arranging the photographs in a splay of uneven grids across two walls hinged by a corner. The sense of reflection and repetition is animated and compounded by doubling some of the original photographs, and by the quiet insertion of Simpson's re-stagings of various images, using herself as model. The constructed images blend in almost seamlessly with the found photos, producing an effect that is as uncanny as it is seductive.

Repurposing vernacular photographs often involves grouping images for sociological insight, pointing to obsessions and conventions of everyday picture-making. In *1957–2009 Interiors*, however, Simpson seems more interested in understanding the experience of the woman pictured, of battling clichés and stereotypes with empathy, and suggesting a vigilance of looking that might begin to unravel them.

Mirroring also provides the structure for the artist's short film *Cloudscope* (2004). The sound of whistling drifts into the gallery and is heard, even if only semi-consciously, over and over before its source – an elegantly dressed man whistling a hymnal tune on an empty noir-ishy lit set – is seen. A cloud of grey swirling smoke slowly engulfs the man as the camera closes in. An almost imperceptible seam breaks the single shot, as the cloud twists, and sound and image shift into reverse. The simple structure is emotional and elegiac, even without the knowledge that the whistler is American sculptor and musician Terry Adkins, who sadly passed away in February.

Upstairs, the sombre mood and black and white palette broke into movement and colour. In *Momentum* (2010), a two-channel video projected onto cinema-sized screens suspended in the centre of the room, gold-clad *en pointe* ballet dancers with buoyant, gilded afros rehearse another re-enactment: this time of Simpson's own memory of performing at New York's Lincoln Center as a young girl. The surrounding wall work makes an installation of the moment, with blow-ups of vintage postcard images composed from fuzzy grids of felt in *Day Time* and *Day Time (Gold)* (both 2011), and pop photo-collages and drawings of heads and streaks of hair in vivid sweeps of jewel colours in *Ebony Collages and Gold Heads* (both 2013). The screens are arranged at angles, the rehearsal on two loops, one a few beats behind the other. The slip of synchronicity is just enough to necessitate a back and forth of looking and looking again that becomes the viewer's repeated gesture.

Indeed, repetition and re-enactment bring coherence to a practice spanning 30 years and encompassing various media (though photography is often at its core). While Simpson's earliest works, particularly the image/text pieces from the 1980s, feel a little dated, a retrospective understanding also makes clear the legacy that Simpson, alongside Glenn Ligon, Kara Walker, Carrie Mae Weems and others, has wrought. Throughout the '80s and '90s, black American artists opened up revolutionary discussions about representations of race, gender and sexuality in art. Whilst these remain vital aspects of Simpson's practice, this current retrospective shows that the work has, and always has had, space for more expansive responses: for looking again and seeing something else.

SARA KNELMAN