

**PRESSBOOK**

GELITIN

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## 'GELATIN GELITIN GELINTIN' | AN EXHIBITION

ALICE PEARCE × OCTOBER 20, 2016 × ART × COVERAGE × EVENTS

When it comes to unbridled creativity and raw experimentation, *Gelatin* is possibly the closest you can get. In a normative sense, the Austrian collective *Gelatin* are themselves as much of a riddle as their artwork. Over the past two decades they have racked up a series of humourously sensational (or puzzling) global art events. Some of which were displayed at the *Galerie Perrotin* in Hong Kong, back in July and August this year, under the exhibition title *Gelatin Gelitin Gelintin*. Notably, their *Mona Lisa* piece was featured on the September cover of *Bazaar Art HK*.

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Costume horses | Photo courtesy of Alice Pearce | © Gelatin

*"Wearing the horses creates a strong feeling to be part of a show, rather than looking at a show."*



Gelatin in horse costumes at Gelatin Gelatin Gelatin | Photo courtesy of Elliot Albrecht | © Gelatin

*Gelitin* embraces long-term envisionment as much as spontaneity in their creations. The team points out that whilst they like to "take aim and watch the trajectory of it", they don't aim to "hit" anything in particular, but rather to keep moving forward and finding inspiration in novel situations. Open and receptive, the collective extracts their reactions to the "whispers and screams" of a place, gathering an intuition about what they can "contribute or substitute or turn around" to create something. It is a very intrinsically motivated creative process. Sometimes, they experience moments of clarity between bouts of "short-sightedness where everything is a blur". Like artistic nomads, there are times when *Gelitin* stumbles upon the perfect situation for a project they have been carrying in their minds for many years. It is that marriage of spontaneity and opportunistic sense which makes *Gelitin's* event pieces a phenomenal rarity.

*"Our work is about some subconscious feeling and emotion."*



*The B-Thing* | Photo courtesy of Alice Pearce | © *Gelitin*

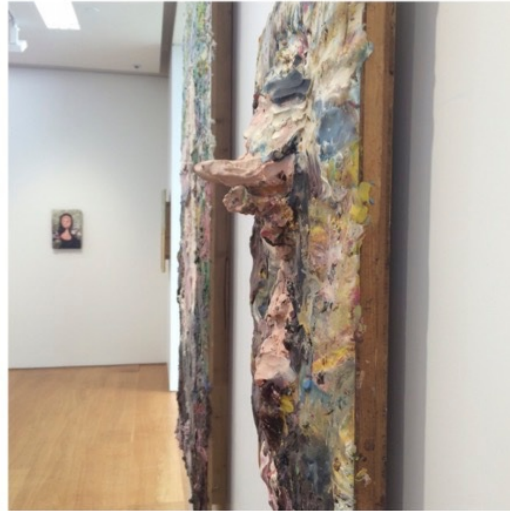
*The B-Thing* is a series of photographs documenting *Gelitin's* illegal "surgical intervention" of the World Trade Centre in New York back in 2000. In their official studio residence on the 91st floor, the artists removed the glass window to suspend a "little shaky bricollage" (balcony) 400 meters above the ground, to then stand on it for 10 minutes. The whole act was captured on camera from a helicopter. While the act may seem about the transgression itself, *The B-Thing* entertained a city dream and a rawer sense of emotion: the "desire to step outside a window...the pleasure you absorb when you stand on it [balcony], being totally dependent on a structure and atmosphere you have created yourself" (*Gelatin*, Bookforum, 2001). They divulged more on *The B-Thing*:

*"We felt so encaged inside the World Trade Centre. So we opened a window to let some air in and some sun and some noise and sounds of the city. And it feels very very very good when you stand on a balcony you have built yourself, and you see the sunrise over brooklyn and you see and smell and hear this beautiful city from a little shaky bricollage 400 meters above ground."*



*'Untitled' from the Mona Lisa series | Photo courtesy of Galerie Perrotin | © Gelitin*

Experiencing Gelatin, *Gelatin*, *Gelatin* is akin to watching *Moulin Rouge* after seeing *The Notebook* – confusing yet whimsically spectacular in a let loose fashion. The *Mona Lisa* series is Gelatin's post-modern pastiche of the classical *Mona Lisa*. Here, amongst their polar and diverse works, emerges a common theme in their paintings: reinventing oversaturated historical art iconography. *Gelatin Gelatin Gelatin* showcased numerous flower paintings and portraits like the *Mona Lisa*. The *Mona Lisa* series was produced and deformed using plasticine, pigments and wax: meaning the portraits are soft and malleable to touch.



*'Untitled' from the Mona Lisa series | Photo courtesy of Alice Pearce | © Gelatin*



*Bust and portraits | Photo courtesy of Alice Pearce | © Gelatin*

Transformation and decay is another strand *Gelatin* follow. *Rabbit* (2005) is a 55 meter giant knitted pink rabbit stuffed with straw, left on Colletto Fava in northern Italy till 2025, which by that time, will have completely decomposed. Over the years, grass grows through and soils its knitted skin, and animals furrow inside it. The rabbit attracts many tourists around the world who come to visit it. Apparently, whenever there is a ladder, someone from the nearby village goes up and repairs it. A large topographic photo of the rabbit nestled in its hill was displayed alongside a detailed pencil sketch in the exhibition. Below are photos that document the rabbit's decay over time.



*Rabbit (2005) | Photo courtesy Gellin | © Gellin*



*Rabbit (2011) | Photo courtesy Gellin | © Gellin*



*Rabbit (2007) | Photo courtesy Gellin | © Gellin*



*Rabbit (2011) | Photo courtesy Gellin | © Gellin*

There are no solid or defining 'themes' in *Gelitin's* art, but rather an encompassing philosophy of creation specific to *Gelitin* only - its trademark style which makes them *them*. The best part about this exhibition was its location. A complete juxtaposition: in a skyscraper, in central Hong Kong where mindsets never truly venture out of business monotony - how would the audience here respond to their style of art and performance?



Untitled | Photo courtesy of Alice Pearce | © Gelitin

*"Art for us is a dialog. With this in mind we can disagree very much and still keep up a very good conversation."*



Untitled | Photo courtesy of Alice Pearce | © Gelitin

We are used to looking for obvious meaning behind things, to be efficiently mindless and sift out the nonsensical - it becomes a rigid mindset. To understand *Gelitin's* works is to revert such mindsets: participating with curiosity rather than rejecting it out of ignorance. However, *Gelatin Gelitin Gelitin* makes it obvious that this approach is not easy when appreciating *Gelitin's* work, simply because it lacks recognisable motive and the origins of their ideas are often not understood or revealed. Nonetheless, they give fight to the cause that we should break free of certain modes of thought, and to embrace new perspectives of thinking - to appreciate and to be in the moment without judgement. We should take in what is in front of us instead of searching for something that isn't there.





Untitled | Photo courtesy of Alice Pearce | © Gelatin

*"They want their art to bring joy, to be immediate,  
and any explanations regarding content or theoretical  
discourse would only get in the way of their aim."  
(Monte Packham, 2006)*

Speaking to the artists of *Gelatin* is in itself an experience, you won't receive the information as factually as you'd expect. When asked to describe their collective *Gelatin*, they reply: "*Gelatin* grows on a field of possibilities, we fold over each other like leaves of a salad. When an artwork falls out like a crumble of earth stuck between the folds of the leaves it is always a beautiful surprise."

When asked if their artwork reflects their outlook on life, they reply: "we find missing places, things that need to be called into existence and create them. You can absolutely transform your surrounding and your own mind by a poetic gesture, one can brush up other minds through that as well."

*With special thanks to Gelatin for their insight and press materials.*

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References

ART AUSTRIA BAZAAR ART HK EXHIBITION GALERIE PERROTIN  
GELATIN GELATIN GELITIN GELINTIN GELITIN ARTIST  
HARPER'S BAZAAR HONG KONG MONA LISA NEW YORK RABBIT  
THE B-THING VIENNA WORLD TRADE CENTRE