

MOSTYN

GALLERY CAFÉ SHOP
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LARGE FORMAT
EXHIBITION GUIDE

ANATHEMATA

ANTONIN ARTAUD

MARTIN BLADH

DENISE COLOMB

PIERRE GUYOTAT

PAUL-ALEXANDRE ISLAS

DAVID JONES

SARAH KANE

JAMES RICHARDS

KAROLINA URBANIAK

CURATED BY

PIERRE-ALEXANDRE MATEOS

AND CHARLES TEYSSOU

9 OCTOBER 2021 - 6 FEBRUARY 2022

GALLERY 6

INTRODUCTION

Anthemata is a display that interrogates the tradition of epic poetry within a tetrad of 20th century avant-garde artists; David Jones, Antonin Artaud, Sarah Kane and Pierre Guyotat. These four artists are presented alongside contemporary artists Martin Bladh, Paul-Alexandre Islas, James Richards and Karolina Urbaniak through a display of manuscripts, drawings and videos.

The exhibition title is borrowed from David Jones's eponymous poem published in 1952. A British poet and artist of Welsh descent, Jones is considered a leading figure within modernist poetry along with James Joyce and T. S. Eliot. His poem, *The Anthemata*, investigates

the importance of mythology within the history of humanity from a modernist perspective. Written in the aftermath of the Second World War and interweaving Welsh and English late medieval sources, it defends the importance of epic narratives, fables and myths against the desacralising effect of modernism. Considered Jones' seminal work, *The Anathemata* narrates the thought processes of a cambrophile over the span of roughly seven seconds at an English Catholic Mass. Using Old, Middle and Early-Modern English, Welsh, and Latin, *The Anathemata* questions the importance of past mythology within human history - from the Iron Age in Cornwall and Tudor London to Penda's Mercia and the Welsh "Otherworld" - in a highly allusive and nonlinear fashion. In this text, Jones also stresses the importance of the artist as an inventor and bearer of myths.

Antonin Artaud is a French artist considered one of the major figures of early 20th century avant-garde. His texts revolve around transcendence, mysticism, drugs, and extreme corporeal experiment. Like Jones, a large part of Artaud's writing practice challenged and gathered different languages (French, Latin, Arabic), myths and temporalities (from Ancient Greek to Aztec and Early Christian civilisations). Both were concerned with the idea of the impending apocalypse. In his *Letters from Ireland* which he wrote while in exile in Dublin, he details an imagined forthcoming apocalypse, and plans his own role within it as « the revealed one ». Also on display are several of his magic spells, intended to curse his enemies and to protect his friends from Paris' forthcoming incineration and the Antichrist's appearance at the Deux Magots café, an important meeting point for artists and writers in Paris in the post-war era. Artaud's depictions of the human body as dismembered, surrounded by flying nails, translated the agonies of his physical as well as psychical life. Indeed, between June 1943 and 1944, Artaud was subjected several times to electroshock therapy in Rodez (France). Cast aside from his community and finishing his life in an asylum, Artaud was in a sense the subject of an anathemata. In Artaud's work, the body experiences a form of disfiguration, it is "outside the figure of being". Caught between life and death, the visible and the invisible, it is ultimately traced by the lines of forces drawn from the electromagnetic spectrum.

Pierre Guyotat was a preeminent French artist who died in 2020. Like David Jones, he was a poet interested in the epic format, the fragmentation of words, and the use of heterogeneous languages from various historical periods and geographies. Similarly to Jones, he was a soldier. He was enlisted in the Algerian war, an experience that inspired him to write *Tomb for 500,000 Soldiers*. Written in 1967, this book was censored and, in a way, anathematised. Composed of seven songs, it can be perceived as a cataclysmic incantation. Moreover, he is maybe one of the last mythical figures of the French literary scene that could be affiliated with poets such as the Marquis de Sade, Arthur Rimbaud or Artaud. Guyotat works with a mutant language, inhabited by bodies, animals and ghosts. He incorporates and carries in each of his works the cursed part of humanity. His visions are dazzling, the body triturated, wounded, exalted, entangled, seen in its convulsive materiality. Words and bodies function as apparitions in constant metamorphosis.

Sarah Kane is a renowned British dramaturge whose radical conception of theater has been compared to Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty. While her plays examine human atrocities such as cannibalism, sexual violence and war abjections, her *mise en scène* is devoid of any affectation. Her subjects are stripped to the bone, laid bare like a cadaver. Her first play, *Blasted*, which opened at the Royal Court Theater Upstairs on 12th January 1995, presents a brutal vision of war-torn society through a series of violent acts. The title could also echo the avant-garde poetry magazine founded by Wyndham Lewis, *Blast*, which presented ideas about art that are close to those of Sarah Kane: injecting reality directly into people's heart. Like David Jones, she considered history as a palimpsest of myths and rituals that could be found in one of the most popular epic spectacles of her time, football. She saw in the matches played by Manchester United the representation of a myth in which the Gods fought for possession of the sun.

Martin Bladh and Karolina Urbaniak are artists, photographers, multimedia players and founders of the publishing house Infinity Land Press. Along with Stephen Barber, they have participated in the dissemination of authors such as Antonin Artaud within the British cultural scene through their work as publishers. Established in 2013, Infinity Land Press is self-described as a "realm deeply steeped in

pathological obsessions, extreme desires, and private aesthetic visions". For the exhibition, they will notably present *On The New Revelations of Being*, a video based on Antonin Artaud's apocalyptic manifesto from 1937. It envisions the end of the world and the death of God through a series of cataclysmic occurrences of Artaudian cruelty.

Artist James Richards is known for working across moving image, sound and installation. A newly commissioned work, *Phrasing*, based on precedent research and developed through 80 slides, is exhibited for the first time as part of the display. Cutting and recombining images from various sources such as radiographies, comics, and medieval engraving, he digs into what could be called a modern epic. His use of X-Rays acts as an inner search, an opening of bodies and objects, an effraction of envelopes that deals with the secret of interiority. In that sense, his quest finds echoes in the introspective voices of Jones, Artaud, Guyotat and Kane and becomes a receptacle for the tumults and hubbubs of the world.

Finally, Paul-Alexandre Islas, is an artist, musician and Artaud's reader who notably questions the violent dimension of art, its personal cost and the legitimacy of the people who allow themselves to practice it. Similarly to Artaud, Islas doesn't have superstition about the already written poetry. If poetry is already written, let it be destroyed.

From Jones' lecture of Arthurian legends to Islas' contemporary incantations, the exhibition *Anathemata* tries through myths, violence, desire, war, and the superhuman devotions that are found in the works presented, to bring forth a spectacle capable of stirring up the forces that are boiling within them.

GLOSSARY

1) Anathemata

A reprobation or a solemn blame, by extension someone subject of opprobrium. In Christianity, A curse sentence that removes a person from the communion of the Church.

‘Anathemata’ are votive objects, but as Jones states in his Preface, it is intended that the reader also experience the word ‘anathema’ through the pun on the longer derivative, and thus experience a duality’: ‘anathema’ originally signifying something blessed, but later coming to signify something cursed (Ana 289).

2) Cambrophile

A lover of Wales or Welsh culture.

3) Mise en scène

Staging or set of material and symbolic choices for a performance; choice of sets, places, movements and acting, intonation, music, casting, poster.

4) Penda of Mercia

Penda (died 15 November 655) was a 7th-century King of Mercia, the Anglo-Saxon kingdom in what is today the Midlands.

5) already written poetry

poésie déjà écrite is a phrase coined by Antoine Artaud.

6) Tetrad

A group or set of four.

7) Desacralising

The process of making something less sacred.

8) Otherworld

Also known as Annwn, Annwfn or Annwfn, is a mythical place in Welsh mythology akin to a notion of paradise in the afterlife.

9) Heterogeneous

Diverse in character or content.

10) Triturated

A verb meaning to pulverise something thoroughly by rubbing, grinding or chewing.

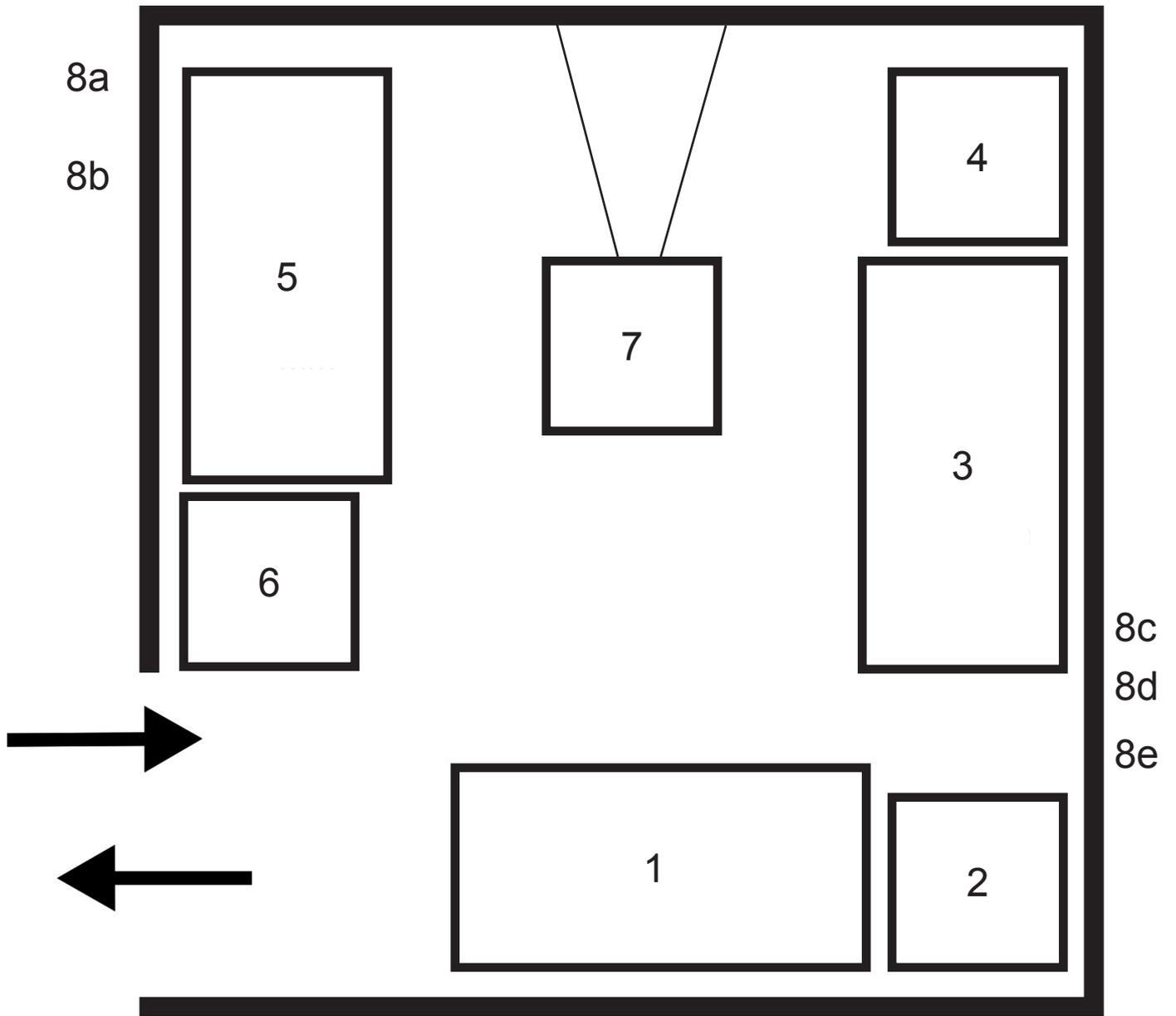
11) Dramaturge

An editor in a theatre working with authors who researches, selects, adapts, edits and interprets scripts.

12) Palimpsest

A piece of writing material of which later writing has been superimposed over the earlier writing.

LIST OF WORKS



1 (VITRINE) - From left to right

- a. Antonin Artaud, Letter to André Breton, 5 September 1937
(Letter with an accompanying magic spell, sent from Galway),
Conserved at Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet, Paris
- b. Paul-Alexandre Islas, il va y avoir du sang (there will be blood), 2021
Courtesy the artist
- c. Antonin Artaud, Letter to André Breton, 8 September 1937
(Letter sent from Galway), P1p2, P3, P4
Conserved at Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet, Paris
- d. Tel Quel, Issue 52, 1972
- e. Antonin Artaud, letter to Jacqueline Breton, 17 Medi 1937
(Magic Spell, sent from Dublin), 1937
Conserved at the Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet, Paris
- h. David Jones, Quia per Incarnati, c.1953
W/c & graphite on paper
Courtesy Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, UK / Bridgeman
Images and The Trustees of the David Jones Estate / Bridgeman Images
- g. David Jones, Studies for 'Dice Players at the Foot of The Cross'
Date not known,
Courtesy Tate Archive, London
- h. Martin Bladh, After Rembrandt's The Blinding of Samson, 1636, 2014
Mixed media on cardboard
Courtesy the artist
- i. The Anathemata, David Jones, 1952
Faber & Faber; Main editions, 2010
- j. David Jones, Notes on The Anathemata
Courtesy Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, UK / Bridgeman
Images and The Trustees of the David Jones Estate
- k. David Jones, The Waters Compassed Me About, illustration for the Book
of Jonah, pub. by Golden Cockerel Press, 1926
Wood engraving
Courtesy Wolseley Fine Arts, London, UK / Bridgeman Images and
The Trustees of the David Jones Estate / Bridgeman Images

- l. David Jones, *The Storm Tree*, 1948
Watercolour, pencil and pastel on paper
Courtesy the Trustees of the David Jones Estate and the British Council
Collection Photo © The British Council
- m. David Jones, *Brief Record of a Bird on Bough*, 1948
Pencil and chalk on paper, facsimile
Courtesy the Trustees of the David Jones Estate and the British Council
Collection Photo © The British Council

2 - (VIDEO)

Artaud 1937 *Apocalypse - Letters from Ireland* by Antonin Artaud, 2018
1 min 40 sec
Video by Karolina Urbaniak
Reading by Christophe Delesques
Courtesy the artist

3 - (VITRINE) - From left to right

- a. *Portrait of Pierre Guyotat*, 1966-67 (DR)
Courtesy Fonds Pierre Guyotat at Bibliothèque Nationale de France
- b. *Portrait of Pierre Guyotat as a teenager*
Courtesy Fonds Pierre Guyotat at Bibliothèque Nationale de France
- c. Pierre Guyotat, *Extract from Eden Eden Eden*, "El maintenant nous ne sommes plus esclaves", 1970
Digital print
- d. Pierre Guyotat, *Eden, Eden, Eden*, 1970
Original manuscript (facsimile), t1, t2
Courtesy Fonds Pierre Guyotat at Bibliothèque Nationale de France
- e. Jacques Callot, *The Shepard Playing the Flute*, from *Les Caprices* Series A, The Florence Set, 1617
- f. Jacques Callot, *La Pendaison (The Hanging)*, 1633
- g. *Eden, Eden, Eden*, 1970
Translated by Graham Fox
Published by Vauxhall&Company, 2017

- h. Pierre Guyotat, Le Livre, 1984,
nrf Gallimard, 1984
- i. Pierre Guyotat, Le Livre, Edition of 25, individually signed and
numbered
Courtesy Cabinet Gallery
- j. Pierre Guyotat, Le Livre 1984, Original Manuscript (facsimile)
Courtesy Cabinet Gallery
- k. Pierre Guyotat, Tombs for 500 000 soldiers, 1967
Original manuscript (facsimilie), t62, t63, t64
Courtesy Fonds Pierre Guyotat at Bibliothèque Nationale de France
- l. Pierre Guyotat, Le Livre 1984,
Original manuscript (facsimile), t70, t70bis
Courtesy Fonds Pierre Guyotat at Bibliothèque Nationale de France

4 - (VIDEO)

On The New Revelations of Being, 2018
Libretto & voice - Martin Bladh
Sound, visuals & prodction - Karolina Urbaniak
Courtesy the artist

5 - (VITRINE) - From left to right

- a. Sarah Kane, Props list, version 1, page 2 for Blasted by Sarah Kane, Royal Court Theatre, London, UK, November 1994 - February 1995. Courtesy Royal Court Theatre / Victoria and Albert Museum, London
- b. Sarah Kane, Props list, version 1 for Blasted by Sarah Kane, Royal Court Theatre, London, UK, November 1994 - October 1995. Courtesy Royal Court Theatre / Victoria and Albert Museum, London
- c. Sarah Kane, Cleansed at the Duke of York's Theatre, photo Graham Brandon. London, England, 1998. Courtesy Graham Brandon / Victoria and Albert Museum, Llundain
- d. Rhaglen Blasted o'r Royal Court Theatre, Casgliad Mander & Mitchenson
Courtesy the Casgliad Theatr Prifysgol Bryste
- e. Blasted programme from the Royal Court Theater, Mander & Mitchenson Collection
Courtesy University of Bristol Theatre Collection.
- f. Blasted programme from the Royal Court Theater, Mander & Mitchenson Collection
Courtesy University of Bristol Theatre Collection.
- g. Manchester United: Home Shirt, FA Cup Final Wembley 1985
Courtesy of Mark Hughes
- h. Antonin Artaud, Magic Spell sent to Sonia Mossé, 14 May 1939
Courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
- i. Antonin Artaud, Magic Spell entrusted to Roger Blin, 21 May 1939
Courtesy Fonds Pierre Guyotat at Bibliothèque Nationale de France
- j. Antonin Artaud, Cahier, Ivry, Janvier, 1984
Facsimile Edition établie et préface par Evelyne Grossman, nrf, Gallimard
- k. Martin Bladh, Illustration for Succubations & Incubations: Selected Letters of Antonin Artaud 1945-1947, 2021
Mixed media on cardboard
Courtesy the artist

6 - (VIDEO)

FA Cup Classic | Chelsea 1-2 Manchester United 1996, | Cole & Beckham send United to Wembley, 1996
Courtesy Manchester United Football Club Archive

7 - (CENTRAL PROJECTION)

James Richards, research collages from Phrasing, 2018
35mm Slides, Kodak Ektapro Carousel Projector
Courtesy the artist, Cabinet Gallery and Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi

8 - (WALL BASED)

- a. Denise Colomb, Portrait of Artaud, 1947
Printed 1989
Black and white print on Baryté de luxe paper
Artist's proof signed
Published by Cabinet Gallery London & Private Collection, France
- b. Denise Colomb. Portrait of Artaud, 1947
Printed 1989
Black and white print on Baryté de luxe paper.
Artist's proof signed.
Published by Cabinet Gallery London & Private Collection, France
- c. Pierre Guyotat, Untitled, 2016
Courtesy Cabinet Gallery
- d. Pierre Guyotat, Untitled, 2016
Courtesy Cabinet Gallery
- e. Pierre Guyotat, Untitled, 2016
Courtesy Cabinet Gallery

PLAYLIST

- Claude Debussy, The Little Shepherd (Le Petit Berger), 1906-1908
- Félix Mendelssohn, A Midsummer Night's Dream (Songe d'une nuit d'été), 1842
- Edvard Grieg : Peer Gynt suite n°2, Chanson de Solveig, 1876
- Robert Schumann, Symphony No.1 "Spring" - Third Movement, 1841
- Claude Debussy, Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun (Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un faune), 1892

ABOUT THE ARTIST

1) ANTONIN ARTAUD

Antonin Artaud (1896–1948) was a French actor, director, drama theoretician and one of the key figures of the European avant-garde. Artaud developed his theory of the Theatre of Cruelty which sought to strip drama of its contrived theatrical concepts and return it to its symbolic and ritualistic roots. *Les Cenci* (1935), derived from Shelley and Stendhal, was his only play based on his theoretical writings. He became interested in surrealism and symbolist drama, contributing to *Révolution Surréaliste* and *La Nouvelle Revue Française* and with Roger Vitrac (1899–1952) founded the Théâtre Alfred Jarry (1927) which was visited by numerous artists and writers such as André Gide. He had a great interest in cinema and wrote the scenario for an early surrealist film by director Germaine Dulac, *The Seashell and the Clergyman* (1928). This film was an influence on surrealists Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel. Artaud appeared in over 20 films such as Abel Gance's *Napoleon* (1927) and Carl Theodor Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928). His work had a powerful influence on directors and writers such as Peter Brook, Samuel Beckett and Jean Genet. A lifelong sufferer from physical and mental illness, Artaud spent most of the remainder of his life from 1937 in mental institutions.

2) MARTIN BLADH

Martin Bladh is a Swedish-born artist of multiple mediums who lives and works in London. His work lays bare themes of violence, obsession, fantasy, domination, submission and narcissism. Bladh is a founding member of the post-industrial band IRM, the musical avant-garde unit Skin Area and co-founder of Infinity Land Press. His published work includes *To Putrefaction*, *Qualis Artifex Pereo*, *DES*, *The Hurtin' Club*, *Darkleaks - The Ripper Genome*, *Marty Page*, *The Torture of the 100 Pieces* and *Braquemard: The Clavicle of Gilles de Rais*.

3) PIERRE GUYOTAT

Pierre Guyotat (1940 – 2020) was a French writer. Pierre Guyotat has been infamous for the invention of an extreme, excessive, material language of violence and sexuality since the 1967 publication of his first fiction book, *Tomb for 500,000 Soldiers* (English translation 2003). Set during the Algerian war, this epic reflects Guyotat's years as a soldier, and then as a prisoner of the French army, held in solitary confinement for two months and charged with damaging the morale of the troops, possession of prohibited journals, and complicity in desertion. His next novel, *Eden Eden Eden* (1970, English translation 2009), a stark hallucination of the atrocities of war and sexual predation with a preface by Michel Leiris, Roland Barthes and Philippe Sollers, was censored by the French government for eleven years. *Eden* is written in what Guyotat calls "Language," an oratory, visceral, and rhythmic lexicon for the free creation of forms that he distinguishes from prose. He went on to publish *Prostitution* (1975, an excerpt of which was translated in 1995), *Le Livre* (1984, untranslated), *Progénitures* (2000, untranslated).

4) PAUL-ALEXANDRE ISLAS

Paul-Alexandre Islas (URAMI) is an artist, DJ and sex worker who lives and works in Paris. They graduated from the National School of Arts in Paris-Cergy. Islas has notably exhibited at Bonny Poon (Paris), in *Converso* (Milan), at the Sultana Gallery (Paris). In 2020, they participated in *The Opioid Crisis Lookbook* project. They are the co-founder of *Queer Is Not A Label*.

5) DAVID JONES

David Jones (1895 – 1974) was a British painter and modernist poet of Welsh descent. As a painter he worked chiefly in watercolour, on subjects ranging from portraits, animals, landscapes, legends and religion. He was also a wood-engraver and painter of inscriptions. In 1965, Kenneth Clark took him to be the best living British painter, while both T. S. Eliot and W. H. Auden considered his poetry among the best written in the 20th century. Jones' work is derived from his Christian faith and Welsh heritage.

6) SARAH KANE

Sarah Kane(1971–99) was a British playwright and major figure in late 20th-century literature. Born in Brentwood, she studied drama at the University of Bristol and playwriting at the University of Birmingham. While a student she wrote three 20-minute monologues, which she performed at the Edinburgh Festival. Her first full-length play, *Blasted*, was staged at the Royal Court in a production by James Macdonald in 1995. It was followed by *Phaedra's Love*, directed by Kane at Gate Theatre in 1996; *Cleansed*, directed by Macdonald at the Royal Court in 1998; and *Crave*, directed by Vicky Featherstone at the Traverse Theatre in 1998. Her final play *4.48 Psychosis* was produced posthumously at the Royal Court in 2000, directed by Macdonald. Other works include *Skin*, the screenplay for a ten-minute film directed by Vincent O'Connell, and directing a production of *Woyzeck* at Gate Theatre. She ran workshops across Europe 1997–9, including as part of a residency at Paines Plough Theatre Company, and in 1998 was awarded the Arts Foundation fellowship in playwriting.

7) JAMES RICHARDS

James Richards (b. Cardiff, UK 1983) lives and works in Berlin and London. Selected exhibitions include: *When We Were Monsters*, Haus Mödrath Raum Für Kunst, Kerpen (2021) *Alms for the Birds*, Castello Di Rivoli, Turin (2020); *SPEED 2*, Malmö Konsthall w/ Leslie Thornton (2019); *SPEED*, Künstlerhaus Stuttgart w/ Leslie Thornton (2018); *Ache*, Cabinet, London (2019); *Slight Ache*, Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff (2019); *Mouth Room*, Galeri Isabella Bortolozzi (2017); *Requests and Antisongs*, Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover (2017); *Requests and Antisongs*, ICA, London (2016). Selected group exhibitions include: *The Botanical Mind*, Camden Arts Centre (2020); *Whitney Biennial*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2017); *Less Than Zero*, Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis (2016); *Cut to Swipe*, MoMA, New York (2014); *Frozen Lakes*, Artists Space, New York (2013); and *The Encyclopedic Palace*, 55th International Art Exhibition La Biennale de Venezia, Venice (2013). In 2017 Richards represented Wales at the 57th Venice Biennale, and he was shortlisted for the 2014 Turner prize.

8) KAROLINA URBANIAK

Karolina Urbaniak is a multimedia artist and co-founder of Infinity Land Press who lives and works in London. In her practice Urbaniak employs photography, sound design, film, and collage, addressing themes of human destructiveness, the repressed in a psycho-sexual and corporeal context, poetics of madness and the dynamic between violence and creativity. Urbaniak's published works include *To Putrefaction*, *Altered Balance – A Tribute to Coil*, *The Void Ratio*, *Artaud 1937 Apocalypse*, *Death Mort Tod - A European Book of the Dead* and *The Torture of the 100 Pieces*. Her current research combines elements of the urban uncanny, true crime, dark folklore and topographical nostalgia.

CURATORS

PIERRE-ALEXANDRE MATEOS AND CHARLES TEYSSOU

Pierre-Alexandre Mateos (1989) and Charles Teyssou (1988) are a duo of curators and writers. Upcoming and ongoing projects include: Guest Lecturers, Head School, Geneva; Guest Curators, Public Programme, Bourse de Commerce, Pinault Foundation, Paris; ongoing archives Arles Terminal City (arlesterminalcity.com), LUMA Foundation, Arles. They recently curated *GOREGEOUS*, the first retrospective of Darja Bajagić at the Confort Moderne (Poitiers) and an exhibition co-curated with Kevin Blinderman dedicated to the dandy figure Jacques de Bascher at the Kunsthalle Bern. In collaboration with Rasmus Myrup and Octave Perrault, they initiated the Cruising Pavilion, a series of exhibitions dedicated to the links between sexual dissidence, art and architecture that traveled to Venice (16th Architecture Biennale), New York (Ludlow 38) and Stockholm (ArkDes Museum). Previously, they completed a research residency at BOFFO Fire Island (New York) and at the LUMA Foundation Arles. They were the editors in chiefs of *L'Officiel Art* and are regular contributors to *Flash Art*, *Mousse Magazine*, *Spike*, *Double or Cura Magazine*.

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- b. In Parenthesis, David Jones, first published 1937, Faber & Faber, Main editions, 2010
- c. Éden, Éden, Éden, Pierre Guyotat, first published 1970, Solar Books, 2009
- d. Tomb for 500,000 Soldiers, Pierre Guyotat, first published 1967, Creation, 2003
- e. Artaud 1937 Apocalypse Letters from Ireland August to 21 September 1937, Antonin Artaud, Diaphanes, 2019
- f. The Theatre and Its Double, Antonin Artaud, first published 1938, Alma Classics; 1st edition 6 July 2017
- g. The Tel Quel Reader, Patrick French & Roland-Francois Lack, 1998, Routledge, 1998
- h. Blasted, Sarah Kane, first published 1995, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama; New editions, 2001
- i. Cleansed, Sarah Kane, first published 1998, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama; 1st editions, 2006

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