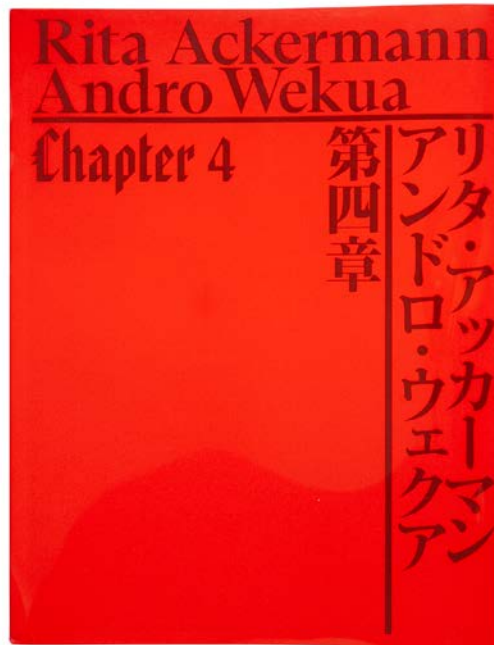




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PRESS RELEASE
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Rita Ackermann / Andro Wekua “Chapter 4”



It was in 2002 that Swiss-based Georgian artist Andro Wekua and New York-based Hungarian artist Rita Ackermann were introduced and began a fruitful creative collaboration with each other. Their remote communication, fuelled by mutual experiences of pictures, music, poetry and plain talk, resulted in the publication of zine-like art books – first self-published (“Chapter 1”) , then published by Swiss publisher Nieves (“Chapter 2” and “Chapter 3”) .

This “Chapter 4” , published by Fergus McCaffrey and Tokyo-based Case Publishing, continues serving as a platform to showcase Ackermann’ s and Wekua’ s mutual artistic fruits. The large-format book includes paintings, drawings and collages of the two artists, created between 2008 and 2021.

The book also includes an essay by curator Gianni Jetzer. All texts are included in English and Japanese translation.

“Ackermann and Wekua are part of a lineage that includes their fellow ‘Easterners’ Georg Baselitz and Sigmar Polke, in that they borrow widely from folk and fairy tales, invoke high and low culture, and navigate a path between state-mandated realism and the perceived allure of American gestural abstraction. Further, it is impossible not to reference two earlier displaced Europeans: Willem de Kooning and Mark Rothko, who seem to provide material and spiritual nutrition in finding a path between figuration, landscape, and pure abstraction.

Wekua begins with collages of animals, palm trees, inwardly consumed adolescents, and abandoned domestic spaces that become gradually obliterated and transformed under layers of bright pinks, purples, acid yellows, turquoises, and magentas that evoke the color palette of Rothko. His vibrant hues contain all of the elder artist’ s contradictions in the apparent elation and the tugging sense of desperation. It is a personal art drawn from a specific place and time, but which has universal resonance despite or because of its stubborn evasiveness.

Though Wekua’ s scale of works and methods are significantly different, both feel psychically fraught and born of struggle. Scraped down and distressed in the making, Wekua’ s means are very evident to behold; loaded with materials and meaning. Portraiture and self-portraiture are amongst Wekua’ s most pressing concerns, and a sense of unease and discomfort is evoked that whispers of alienation and longing. (…)

Ackermann shares the same layering, coding, and disclosure of source imagery, which often appears distracting and at odds with itself, perhaps reflecting a layer of self-defense against prying eyes and pervasive surveillance.”

— from Fergus McCaffrey’s press release



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“Chapter 4” is published in conjunction with an exhibition of the same title at Fergus McCaffrey Tokyo (May 1 – July 3, 2021).

Rita ACKERMANN

The opposing impulses of creation and destruction mark the touchstone of the Hungarian-born, New York-based artist Rita Ackermann’s practice, which continues to evolve and manifest itself in the shift from representation to abstraction.

Ackermann’s compositions occupy a space where human forms simultaneously disappear and reemerge. In a series titled *Chalkboard Paintings*, large-scale compositions on canvas were primed with chalkboard paint, on which washes of white chalk and green and blue pigments were applied. These works, akin to Abstract Expressionism, are reminiscent of actual chalkboards in a classroom, covered with seemingly unintentional erasures and marks, yet they have been conceptually executed by multiple deletions of figurative drawings and landscapes. By way of these gestures, the revenant outline of the erased drawings often emerges into the foreground. The final picture is a record of these movements.

Ackermann’s recent solo exhibitions include *Mama ’20*, Hauser & Wirth Zürich (2020); *Mama ’19*, Hauser & Wirth New York (2020); *Brother and Sister*, Hauser & Wirth Zürich (2019); *Movements as Monuments*, La Triennale di Milano (2018); *Turning Air Blue*, Hauser & Wirth Somerset, England (2017); and *The Aesthetic of Disappearance*, Malmö Konsthall, Malmö, Sweden (2016).

Andro WEKUA

Andro Wekua was born in 1977 in Georgia, and he studied visual arts there and in Basel, Switzerland.

Recent solo museum exhibitions took place in venues including Kunsthalle Zürich; Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow; Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany; Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy; Wiels, Brussels; Neue Kunst Halle, St. Gallen, Switzerland; Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands; Camden Art Centre, London; De Hallen Haarlem, Netherlands; Le Magasin, Grenoble, France; and the Benaki Museum, Athens.

He has participated in various group shows including *ILLUMInations* at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011); *Contemplating the Void* at the Guggenheim Museum in New York (2010); *10,000 Lives*, 8th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2010); *Life on Mars*: 55th Carnegie International, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; and the 4th Berlin Biennale (2006).



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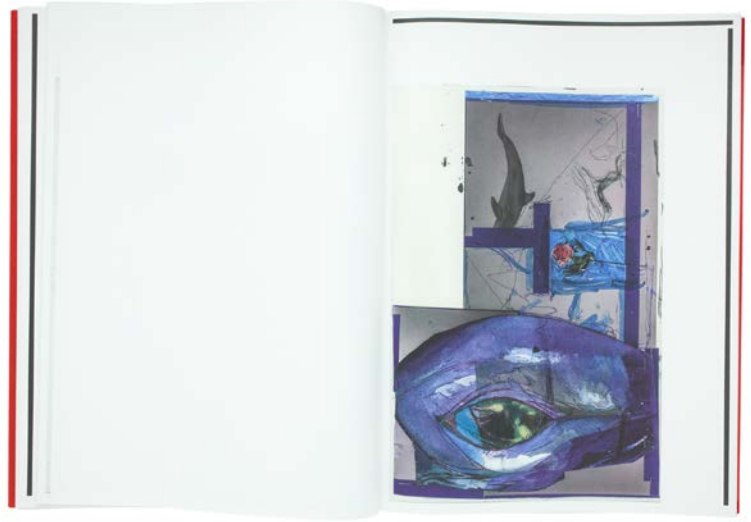
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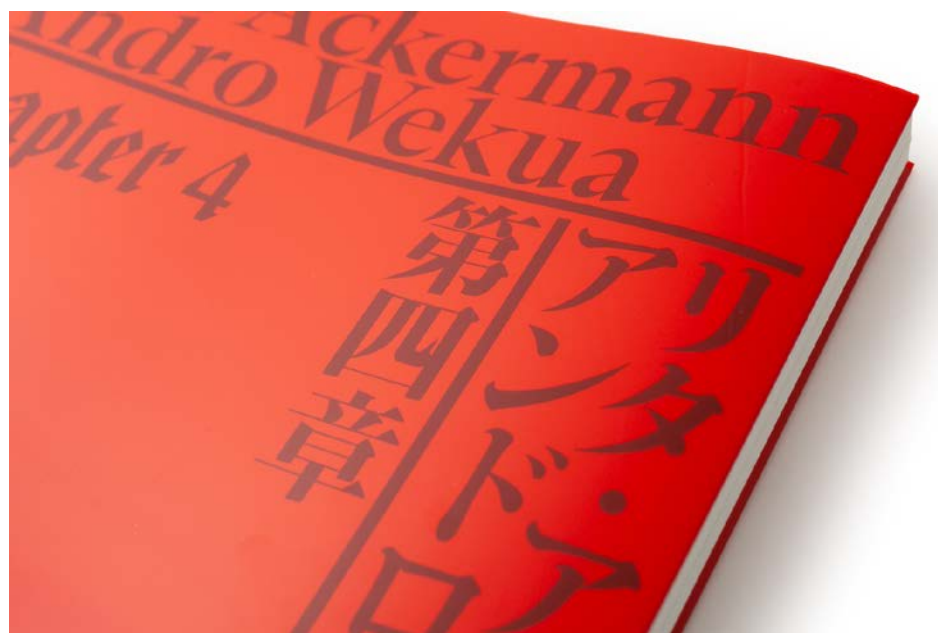
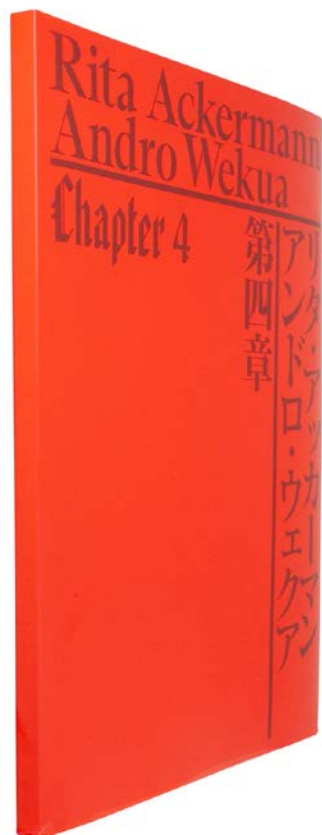
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