



## NATION

Issues of nationhood are central to a number of works in the exhibition. Ken Kitano's 25 Participants at 2014 Hong Kong Protests "Umbrella," occupied area (Admiralty, Causeway Bay, Mong kok), Hong Kong, October 12–14, 2014 considers student-led protests against reforms that would give mainland China more control over Hong Kong's electoral system. In this multi-exposure photograph, Kitano superimposes the faces of twenty-five different protesters



Ken Kitano, 25 Participants at 2014 Hong Kong Protests "Umbrella Revolution", 2014

so that the many become one, leading viewers to contemplate collective identity as central to the work of civil protest.

Place, nationality, and identity are central to the works of John E. Buck, which present symbolic landscapes that serve as visual maps that contextualize national debates. Buck's Moscow on the Seine considers Russia's construction of an Orthodox cathedral in Paris, on the banks of the Seine River. He represents allegations of Russian cultural and territorial hegemony through the image of a betasled bear holding a sickle and hammer. This symbol of Russia stands against a background that reads as a visual history of the nation, told through satirical caricatures of several iconic political and cultural figures (Vladimir Putin, Grigori Rasputin, Anna Akhmatova, and Nikita Khrushchev, among others) and well-known international architectural monuments (St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, and the Chrysler Building and the Twin Towers in New York).

## ANIMAL RIGHTS

Sue Coe is an ardent defender of animal rights. In *Auschwitz Begins Whenever Someone Looks at a Slaughterhouse and Thinks They're Only Animals*, she confronts the realities of meat production and consumption from the perspective of animals. In this long, woodblock print, men brutally herd cows and pigs into a walled enclosure for slaughter. Coe exaggerates the expressions on the faces of the animals, which appear more human than animal. By referencing the site of a well-known Nazi concentration camp and adding barbed wire to the top of the slaughterhouse walls, Coe likens the present-day treatment of livestock to acts of murder committed by the Nazis. The surrounding city suggests that the cruelties of the slaughterhouse, like those of Auschwitz, take place in towns everywhere. Coe draws heavily from the artistic style of the emotionally charged work of Expressionist printmakers, particularly Käthe Kollwitz (German, 1867–1945), and emulates her use of powerful, affordable, and widely circulated prints as a means to draw attention to pressing social issues and foster good.



Sue Coe, *Auschwitz Begins Whenever Someone Looks at a Slaughterhouse and Thinks: They Are Only Animals*, 2009

## SOCIAL JUSTICE



Manu Brabo, *The Silent Conflict of Casamance*, 2014

alluding to the condescending, "backward glance" of the modern at matters traditional and indigenous.

In Rosa Sparks, self-proclaimed art evangelist Steve Prince presents a tableau of black experience in America by recreating the momentous event in Montgomery, Alabama, where Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to white passengers. At the front of the bus, a haloed Parks sits defiantly in response to the standing bus driver's gesture that she move to the back. At the left, a line of figures, some in silhouette, represent the experiences of black Americans—from the chains of slavery to present-day threats of gun violence.



Steve Prince, *Rosa Parks*, 2017

They are joined by references to others inspired by Rosa's spark, civil rights leaders Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. A rider at the back of the bus holds a Bible turned to Matthew 5:3–10. This passage describes the the Beatitudes, beginning with "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...."

## THE ENVIRONMENT



Toshio Shibata, *Nikko City, Tochigi Prefecture (C-2245)*, 2013

Rather than present aesthetically composed views of the natural landscape with subtle traces of human intervention, Yao Lu starts with environmental waste sites, which he adorns to appear beautiful. In his photograph *Viewing the City's Places of Interest in Springtime*, he captures what at first glance seems to be a traditional Chinese mountain landscape painting. It is only upon closer inspection that one discovers the mountains to be mounds of garbage covered in green nets. Those elements initially perceived as representations of nature's beauty are in fact made up of trash that threatens the future of the natural world. Lu calls attention to the problem of waste in a rapidly industrializing China by upending the revered tradition of landscape painting and its status as a symbol of identity and national pride.

Toshio Shibata and Yao Lu create idyllic photographs that ask difficult questions about human interactions with the natural environment. In *Nikko City, Nagano Prefecture*, Shibata presents a carefully composed landscape of balanced colors and shapes. The subject of this photograph, however, is the dam and its unnatural place within its surroundings. Sprouting through the dam's cement walls, incursions of weeds suggest the uncertain ability of humans to control nature.

## WOMEN



Hung Liu, *Black Madonna*, 2016

The persecution of cultural groups is a shared concern of Manu Brabo and Steve Prince. Brabo's *The Silent Conflict of Casamance* focuses on the thirty-seven-year conflict between the Senegalese government and the people of Casamance, a religious and ethnically distinct region of Senegal. Against a war-torn backdrop, Brabo captures the reflection of a man dressed in the traditional costume for a circumcision ceremony. Brabo's photograph underlines the threat that constant warfare poses to indigenous peoples, while subtly alluding to the condescending, "backward glance" of the modern at matters traditional and indigenous.

In her photographs, Moroccan-born artist Lalla Essaydi challenges the hypersexualized and stereotypically submissive depictions of Muslim women by reclaiming their bodies, spaces, and stories. *Harem 14C* depicts a Moroccan woman whose body is masked by the pattern of her clothing and henna body art, all of which blends into the highly decorated architectural space of the harem that surrounds her. Traditionally seen as the domestic building dedicated to women in a Muslim household, the harem came to be regarded by Europeans as an eroticized space of male fantasy. Essaydi's photograph confronts this fiction and presents the woman's face, hands, and feet as visible signs of resistance to this tradition. On her exposed skin, viewers glimpse pieces of the poetic narratives that record the woman's story in henna. Essaydi engages the space of the harem to challenge stereotypes and initiate dialogue about the lives of contemporary Muslim women living in Morocco. While initially seen as scandalous in her home country, Essaydi's works gained widespread recognition and became a source of national discussion when several were acquired for the private collection of King Mohammed of Morocco.

Jacqueline Amezcua '19



Lalla Essaydi, *Harem, #14C*, 2009

Left: Yao Lu, *Viewing the City's Places of Interest in Springtime*, 2007

Hung Liu was trained in Beijing, where she labored under the rigid academicism of the Chinese Social Realist style. Uninspired by the stiff, didactic art demanded of the People's Republic of China, she secretly adopted a more expressive approach, one based on working from photographs of people, often unknown women in marginal or liminal contexts (prostitutes, for example). In 1984, Liu emigrated to the United States, where she further developed her practice. *Black Madonna* is from her *Promised Land* series, which is based on photographs of Depression-era migrants, including those taken by Dorothea Lange (American, 1895–1965). In this study of motherhood, Liu recasts the idealized stereotype of a mother and child in more realistic terms.

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