

2019: The Year According to Marianna Simnett



To commemorate the year that was, we invited an array of artists, writers, filmmakers, designers, and performers to share a list of the most noteworthy ideas, events, and objects they encountered in 2019.

Through film, installation, drawing, and sculpture, Marianna Simnett's art challenges the way bodies are perceived and imagined. She earned her MA at the Slade School of Art in 2013, won the Jerwood/FVU Award in 2014, and was shortlisted for the Jarman Award in 2017. Simnett's work has shown internationally, including solo exhibitions at Kunsthalle Zürich (2019), Copenhagen Contemporary, (2019), FACT Liverpool (2019), and the New Museum (2018). Her work *The Needle and the Larynx* (2016) is on view at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts through February 23, 2020, in the Walker-organized exhibition, *The Body Electric*.

BY
Marianna Simnett

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PART OF SERIES

2019
THE YEAR
ACCORDING TO

SmH

I.
CHELSEA MANNING



Chelsea Manning's fierce resistance against the US carceral state fights the sick reality of the abuse of trans, queer, nonbinary, and marginalized people. Reincarcerated after refusing to testify in a grand jury investigation of WikiLeaks, she needs more visibility and support than ever. You can support Chelsea Manning [here](#) or write her a letter. Free Chelsea Manning <3

2.
THE VIOLENCE OF GENDER
(CURATED BY SUSANNE PFEFFER)



Still from Ma Qiusha's *From No.4 Pingyuanli to No.4 Tianqiaobeili*, 2007

This desperately needed exhibition exposed the subtle violent frameworks that govern normative behaviors and sexualities. At the same time it provided ways out of these systems, through painful and healing narratives. The most powerful works were Ma Qiusha's monologue *From No.4 Pingyuanli to No.4 Tianqiaobeili* (2007), about her oppressive Chinese upbringing, spoken with a hidden razor invisibly cutting the inside of her mouth; Wong Ping's *Who's The Daddy* (2017), a twisted fable about fatherhood and masculinity; Julia Phillips's *Exoticizer (Josephine Baker's Belt)* (2017), a reclamation of Josephine Baker's banana skirt, the fruit of which is made to look like pellets; and Anne Imhof's horrid restraint chair, *Prior Park* (2019), engraved with her school emblem.

3.

SALVIA AND PARMA HAM



Parma Ham and Salvia are world-builders, and their vision goes deep. Their commitment to the eradication of gender binarism runs through every pore of their magnificent mutant bodies. Check out their latest project NULLO, a gorgeous new fetishwear collection including deerhoof strap-ons and tentacle harnesses. Rick Owens stealing Salvia's look was embarrassing and wrong yet shows that even the big innovators can't touch these magical creatures.

4.

FKA TWIGS, LUCINDA CHUA & KELLY MORAN



I could drool over *Magdalene*, but it is already being listened to by millions around the world, and will be for many years to come. So I'll point your attention to this titanic performance by FKA Twigs performing "Cellophane" on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, with Lucinda Chua on cello and Kelly Moran playing piano. The ultimate alchemical trio. Wow! Wow! Wow! Watch it! Watch it! Watch it! Now! Now! Now!

5.
MY HEAD IS A HAUNTED HOUSE
 CURATED BY CHARLIE FOX AT SADIE COLES, LONDON

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My head is forever a haunted house. Once you step into the delirious mind of Charlie Fox, nothing will ever be the same again. Fox's treasures come from a lifelong love of things that makes your insides feel strange—weird interiors, diseases, fears, uncensored thoughts. The show was a personal milestone and I birthed two magnificent beasts, *Hyena* and *Swan in the Midst of Sexual Congress* (2019). Fox spewed up a rollercoaster of treats: Mike Kelley's Hermaphrodite Drawings, Cameron Jamie's photos of dog piss, Ed Atkins's fleshy bed sheets,

Sue de Beer making out with herself, Alex da Corte performing as Frankenstein's monster, Emily Schubert's beautiful werewolf masks... if you haven't yet, eat his book *This Young Monster* (2017). It's better than food.

6.
SCOTT WALKER (1943–2019)



It's still too heartbreaking. Not a week has passed without listening to his music. RIP to the greatest there ever was. SW, I hope you and Bowie are frolicking in paradise.

7.
SUSAN HILLER AT MATT'S GALLERY



Susan Hiller, *Channels*, 2013

Susan Hiller (1940–2019) was a power and inspiration. She opened up the world and showed what was missing. I sat on the park bench of *Monument* (1980-81) for hours as a teen, absorbing the mysteries of this extraordinary artist. Matt's Gallery presented Hiller's *Ghost/TV* as their 40th anniversary exhibition, which first opened in 1979. RIP Susan Hiller, and happy birthday Matt's Gallery.

8.

CHINO AMOBI



I listened to Chino Amobi's album *PARADISO* this year for the first time. It felt as though he had flown me to a faraway planet where everything was crystal and nobody spoke in words. Later, I invited him to perform at Kunsthalle Zürich after my exhibition *LAB RATS* because I greedily wanted to hear more. He cast a spell upon the room with his glittering noises, beastly roars, and extracts from his book *Eroica*. We were all frozen in shivers.

9.
ETEL ADNAN



Photo: Simone Fattal

Ninety-four-year-old poet and painter Etel Adnan spoke via Skype with Hans Ulrich Obrist at The Arts Club, London, where she also had a painting exhibition this year. She said her best friend is a mountain. Her red is redder than the reddest red. Her imagination is the fiercest of our time.

10.

NOEL MARSHALL'S *ROAR!* (1981)



Do not take as long as I did to discover this masterpiece. Recommended by artist Nathaniel Mellors after he heard about my love of birds and lions, it stars Tippi Hedren (star of Hitchcock's 1963 classic *The Birds*) and a cast of 150 untrained lions, tigers, cougars, and elephants. I don't care what the story is about or if it's a documentary, comedy or horror. It's everything you never dreamt was possible. Noel was also the executive producer of *The Exorcist* (1973). It's somehow not a million miles away. Whoever made this must be friends with the devil.

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