

16 October - 19 October 2019
146 Royal College Street, London, NW1

IN INGLIA FRANCA

**James Sirrell, Miriam Naeh, Paolo Salvador,
Phillip Reeves, and Rachel Cheung**

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Please Queue Here has invited the artists James Sirrell, Miriam Naeh, Paolo Salvador, Phillip Reeves, and Rachel Cheung to participate in the group exhibition LINGUA FRANCA, curated by Charlotte Knaup. LINGUA FRANCA proposes a study of the nascent trend of Neo-narrational practices in art. Steering away from the structuralist treatment of language in the art of the 1960s, the works included in this show emphatically and intentionally return to utilising language as a material through which narratives and storylines become the subject. Instead of deconstructing language and thereby highlighting its literal usage, they address metaphorical utterances that represent meanings and create narrational structures.

The term lingua franca comes from late 17th century Italian and literally means 'Frankish tongue.' It describes a language or mixture of languages adopted as a common medium of communication by people whose native languages are not the same. The exhibition adopts this term to sketch out its own subtle tale where the artists' adaptations, transformations, and creations of stories become the common material language through which their works relate to each other despite being exercised under different medium conditions. Looking at the treatment of the narrative as an agent of communication, LINGUA FRANCA presents five artistic approaches that turn towards subjectivity and visuality in storytelling and utilise their distinctive voices to raise questions of authorship, chronology, literacy, and representation.

LINGUA FRANCA's examination of the revival of the narrative in contemporary art builds on and extends Please Queue Here's inaugural project, Tactile Amnesia, that explored how contemporary artists have developed a novel fascination with traditional materials.

Charlotte Knaup

LIST OF WORKS

James Sirrell, *Fatsy Sings #1*, 2019. Cyanotype on Fabriano 4 paper. 100x75cm

James Sirrell, *Baby Quilt #3*, 2019. Cyanotype on linen with chiffon, velvet and cotton bias. 90x90cm

James Sirrell, *Handkerchief from E*, 2019. Cyanotype on Fabriano 4 paper. 44x48cm

James Sirrell, *Untitled(Blow)*, 2019. Cyanotype on cotton with felt and brass eyelets. 185x40cm

James Sirrell, *Shoot Him*, 2019. Cyanotype on cotton with felt and brass eyelets. 180x80cm

James Sirrell, *Combs from Lovers*, 2019. Cyanotype on Fabriano 4 paper. 24x34cm

Miriam Naeh, *The Frogs (And Friends)*, 2019.

Metal structure, faux leather, faux fur, towel, silicone, glazed ceramics. 300x130cm

Jesmonite, plastic. 300x130cm

9 Glazed ceramics, towel, embroidery patch. 15x9cm each

Paolo Salvador, *Untitled*, 2019. Oil on canvas. 200x200cm

Paolo Salvador, *Untitled*, 2019. Oil on canvas. 200x200cm

Paolo Salvador, *Untitled*, 2018. Oil on linen. 200x150cm

Phillip Reeves, *Every Good Boy Deserves Fish*, 2019. Oil and charcoal on aluminium dibond, and timbre frame. 4 Panels, 60x165cm each

Phillip Reeves, *The Fools Journey*, 2019. Oil and charcoal on aluminium dibond. 80 individual tiles, 16x12cm each

Rachel Cheung, *Mirror Synesthetes: A Journey away from the Big Other*, 2019. Performance.

Masks from the performance: Mesh, 3d print, Thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU) stretch fabric, cord.

JAMES SIRRELL

JAMES SIRRELL, born in 1991 in England, is a UK-based artist working with mixed media, such as alternative photography, found objects, and textiles.

Sirrell's text-based works in LINGUA FRANCA present the most literal exploration of the narrative. Sirrell's practice often revolves around a singular storyline in which the artist examines the concept of authorship by employing his own thought-up alter-egos and simultaneously referencing iconic artists, singers, and writers through appropriation and adaptation. Poetry and love songs meet violence and irony in form of dialogues, statements, and labels, often on painted textiles or knitted quilts that are reminiscent of banners or protest flags.

Sirrell holds an MA in Fine Arts from Chelsea College of Arts and a BA in Fine Arts from Central Saint Martins in London. Sirrell has exhibited in the US, Germany, and the UK, with residencies in Berlin and London. His most recent shows took place at the Sherwood Centre for the Arts, US; Battersea Arts Centre, London; and included a contribution to Concrete Dreams at Southbank Centre as well as the East Wing Biennial of The Courtauld at Somerset House in London.

MIRIAM NAEH

MIRIAM NAEH, born in Jerusalem in 1988, works and lives between Tel Aviv and London. She works with photography, video installation, sculpture, and performance to abstract reality to a degree of absurdness.

Naeh created *The Frogs (And Friends)* specifically for LINGUA FRANCA. The sculptural work is inspired by the ancient comedy play 'The Frogs' by Aristophanes, and by chorals and orchestras as a means of communication. Naeh plays into the long-standing tradition of metaphorical framing of political issues through animal characters and further explores hierarchical structures in drama and performance by juxtaposing a large conductor figure with a small ceramic frog choir.

Naeh holds an MFA in Fine Arts from Goldsmiths University and BA from Musrara School of Art, Jerusalem. Naeh has exhibited internationally, with her most recent shows including MoBY: Museums of Bat Yam, Israel; Castor Gallery, Safehouse, Tenderpixel Gallery, and Peter von Kant Gallery in London; DE: FORMAL in New York; Binyamin Gallery and Indie Gallery in Tel-Aviv as well as The New Gallery in Musrara, Jerusalem. She has won the Gilbert Bayes Award from the Royal Society of Sculptors in 2019 and the Tiffany & Co. x Outset Studiomakers Prize in 2018. Naeh received the Mayor of Jerusalem Award for Excellence in 2014 and The Morel Derfer Excellence Award in 2013. She was awarded The Zvi and Ofra Meitar Family Fund Excellence Scholarship twice, in 2013 and 2012. Naeh has been featured in Vogue, i-D Vice, Harper's Bazaar, and the Evening Standard, among others.

PAOLO SALVADOR

PAOLO SALVADOR, born in 1990 in Lima, Peru, is a figurative painter living and working in London.

Salvador's paintings are shown for the first time in LINGUA FRANCA. The artist's distinct pictorial language obscures and simultaneously hints at an imminent danger in the encounters of his animal and human subjects that draw in the audience with to their large scale. His works seem to offer only snippets of a narrative and raise issues of chronology in leaving it up to the viewer to decide how his sometimes fragmented subjects have wandered into or out of their place.

Salvador holds an MFA in Painting from The Slade School of Fine Art and a BA Fine Art in Painting from Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. Salvador has exhibited internationally in Peru, Mexico and the UK. His latest solo exhibitions took place at the Cultural Center Ricardo Palma and Centro Colich in Peru. He has also been represented in group exhibitions at Daniel Benjamin Gallery and New Shoreditch Theatre, London; Centro Cultural Ccori Wasi, Peru; Galería Aguafuerte, Mexico; and at the Ministry of Culture in Lima, among others. In the last two years Salvador has been awarded The William Coldstream Prize, The Barto Dos Santos Memorial Award, as well as the The Tom Espley Prize.

Phillip REEVES

PHILLIP REEVES, born in 1985 in England, works as a London-based artist within figurative painting, performance, installation, and film. In his works, he often creates characters and motifs based around fictional narratives that he has been exploring for many years.

Reeves' two works *Every Good Boy Deserves Fish* and *The Fools Journey* were made for LINGUA FRANCA. The latter can function as a complete set of tarot cards and deals with the symbolic metaphors of fortune-telling and destiny, as well as variation and chance in narrational structures. *Every Good Boy Deserves Fish* constitutes a sculptural intervention of the space. The piece can be read from two sides and interweaves the artist's personal anecdotes with hints towards the hair and artifice of ancient Roman sculptures to form two distinct visual narratives reminiscent of night and day.

Reeves holds an MFA in Fine Arts from Goldsmiths University and a BFA in Print Making and Painting from London Metropolitan University. Reeves has had solo exhibitions at Limehouse in London; Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich; Vesterbro Showroom, Copenhagen; Le Salon Vert, Geneva; Vytlačil Campus and New York Factory Studios in New York; as well as at The Foundry in London. He was the winner of the 2018 Wytham Hall Painting Prize and the Husk Studio Residency Award in 2018 and 2019, as well as The Graduate Art Prize with ARTIQ at Herbert Smith Freehill.

RACHEL CHEUNG

RACHEL CHEUNG, born in 1990 in England, is a performance and interdisciplinary artist based in London. Her practice investigates the futurologies of humans and technology in conjunction with science fictions within contemporary art.

Cheung has conceived a site-specific performance for LINGUA FRANCA, during which two masked subjects move about the exhibition site to an uncanny sound piece. Cheung's performance proposes an impedance of facial tracking through specifically designed masks that render the wearer's face illegible. Confronted with the absence of facial recognition and expression, the subjects are compelled to communicate through body movements and the use of space.

She holds an MFA from Goldsmiths University and a BFA from Loughborough University. Her recent solo exhibition projects include Peak Gallery and Chisenhale Studio Gallery, London. In 2019 she won The Red Mansion Art Prize and consequently took part in the award exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts. Further group exhibition in London include South London Gallery, The Yard Theatre, Almanac Projects, Arebyte Gallery, Enclave Projects during the 2017 Art Licks Weekend, as well as the Contemporary Visual Arts Festival, among others. Cheung has also been awarded The Gold Award at Goldsmiths University.



The commercial curatorial platform Please Queue Here champions a new leading generation of emerging artists. Founded by Hillary Needleman in 2018 and joined by partner Nicole Bainov and curator Charlotte Knaup in 2019, PQH manages a carefully selected artist group with outstanding talent and presents their works to a network of collectors, curators, and art professionals. Creating an accessible and refined experience for first-time buyers and established collectors alike, this venture stages individual encounters between artists and patrons with the focus on forming long-standing relationships. To critically examine the diverse media in contemporary art and to situate the artists' practices within the discourse, PQH also organises bi-annual exhibitions in different locations and sites in London.

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