

TOTAL THEATRE ESP

Opening reception: Thu 10 Oct, 6-8pm



The stage is bare. A landscape cut from the pines of a mind. Lights, timeless and exuding life. Backstage latent. Ready. *Total Theatre ESP* is Belmacz's embodiment of Edward Gordon Craig (b.1872, Stevenage UK — d.1966, Vence, France); a 'Craigische vorstellung', an act of Craigian imagination.

An actor, illustrator, director, a scenic designer, thinker and revolutionary philosopher in the Art of Theatre, Craig don't many hats but this gaze was always attuned to the production dramatic stage. He was a doer. Restless in his search for Higher Forms of Beauty, Craig rejected the particularities of the early 20th-century and its fancy for Realist Theatre — a tendency to impose the physical fashions of the day on a production rather than letting the formalities of the performative work abound an audience's eye, be these action, scene or voice — embracing instead simple, severe expressions or the base characteristics of theatrical design, the figure in a space. This theatre is poetry in motion.

Direct and uncompromising, Craig, like many modernist artists, was a man with a strong perspective, "The duty of the Theatre (both as Art and as an Institution) is to awaken more calmness and more wisdom in mankind by the inspiration exhaling from its beauty" (Edward Gordon Craig, *Towards a New Theatre*). This vision has gone on to resonate across ages, across disciplines. Indeed, today Craig's refusal to make plays with naive pizzazz speaks directly the current state of the world, one fettered to elaborate staging of a sociocultural life.

Total Theatre ESP leans into Craig's search for poetic sublimity. Rather than a narrative theme, or some kind of frenzied soap opera, the exhibition unfolds through a modernist meeting of artistic practices. Featuring sculpture and photography, works on and from paper, each artist embraces the formalities of their chosen material, allowing Higher Ideals to direct and guide.

Dramaturgically, *Total Theatre ESP* evolves from a diagonal stage — a three-dimensional place for extrasensory perception. Sculpture creates this in-ordinary environment, with flying candle lights (Michael Kleine) and a porous screen (Camilla Löw) situating us within a place all strangely in mood. As the exhibition arcs, moments and memories, reconstituted through oblique views — be these photographic (Tereza Zelenková), penned, painted or projected (Agata Madejska, Cosima zu Knyphausen and Rechonski respectively) — appear as non-diegetic soliloquies. Representational and not, these two-dimensional images toy with us, demanding a cognitive engagement with the formalities of their enunciative actions, reminding us that there is always more behind a show and script. Operating between realms, the mind's visions of a mysterious past and the physicality of the present, ghostly form (Bora Baboçi and Toby Christian) accentuate this speaking through material cues. Meta-reliefs, these traces of narrative awaken us to the performative possibility found in the Craigian and the particular.

Bora Baboçi (b. 1988, Tirana, Albania) studied architectural design and theory at the University of Toronto, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella in Buenos Aires, and has a masters degree from the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya. Select exhibitions include, Manifesta14, Prishtina (2022); Autostrada Biennale, Kosovo (2021); Mediterranea 19 Biennial, San Marino, Italy (2021); *NEXT Balkan A for Unapologetic*, Sofia, Bulgaria (2021); National Gallery of Albania Ambitions, Tirana, Albanian (2021); EVA International Biennial 39th, Limerick, Ireland (2020).

Toby Christian (b. 1983, Boston, Lincolnshire, UK) studied at Wimbledon College of Art, London before completing his postgraduate training at the Royal Academy Schools in 2012, where he was awarded the Gold Medal. Select exhibitions include, *String Figures / Fadenspiele*, Museum Tinguely, Basel, Switzerland (2024); *Lorem Ipsum | Objetos Nunca Morrem*, CAMA São Paulo & Verniz, São Paulo, Brazil (2024); *Flash_Looking*, Belmacz, London, UK (2024); *After Mallarmé*, Large Glass, London, UK (2024); *no odonata*, Belmacz, London, UK (2023); *Interpolations II*, Galerija Prozori, Zagreb, Croatia (2022); *Lazy Bones*, Casanova, São Paulo, Brazil (2021).

Michael Kleine (b. 1981 Lahr, Germany) completed his MA in music theatre direction at the Theaterakademie in Hamburg. His work has been on view at institutions of the visual and performing arts, including, Bonner Kunstverein; Schinkelpavillon, Berlin; Volksbühne, Berlin; Kunstverein Leipzig; Donaueschinger Musiktage; Ruhrtriennale, Bochum; Theater Basel; Kampnagel, Hamburg; Zentrum für Kunst und Medien, Karlsruhe; Hamburgische Staatsoper; Museion, Bolzano; Sammlung Klosterfelde, Hamburg; Biennale Arte di Venezia; Philharmonie de Paris; Opéra de Reims; FRAC Lorraine, Metz.

Cosima zu Knyphausen (b. 1988, Houston Texas, USA) studied at Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst, Leipzig, Germany. Select exhibitions include, *The Temptation to Exist*, Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin, Germany (2023); *Landschaft*, Galerie Khoshbakht, Cologne, Germany (2023); *The End surprised me*, Weiss Falk, Basel, Switzerland (2022); *Everything I do could be done differently*, piloto pardo at Cecilia Brunson Projects, London, England (2022); *Ausstellung Eins*, Galerie Klein, Hamburg, Germany (2022); *Bajo el sol*, Travesía Cuatro, Madrid, Spain (2022); *Pinturas de género*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Santiago, Chile (2022); *Closet Drama*, piloto pardo, London, England (2021); *Ei Mosaik*, Weiss Falk, Basel, Switzerland (2021).

Camilla Løw (b.1976, Oslo, Norway) graduated with a BA in Fine Art from the Glasgow School of Art. Select exhibitions include, *Virksomheten [The business]*, Kunstnerforbundet, Oslo (2023); *Flower in the Wind*, Belmacz, London (2023); *Carla Åhlander & Camilla Løw*, Belmacz, London (2022); *GIRL MEETS GIRL*, Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Norway (2022); *Space Junk*, ISCA Gallery, Oslo (2021); *High Rise*, ISCA Gallery, Oslo (2020); *Alfabet*, Belmacz, London (2019); *INSTRUMENTAL* (Camilla Løw & Gert Marcus), Fullersta Gärd, Huddinge (2018); *Collective Collaborations*, British Council Collection (touring exhibition) (2018-19).

Agata Madejska (b.1979, Warsaw, Poland) graduated from Folkwang University of the Arts, Essen in 2007 and the Royal College of Art, London in 2010. Selected exhibitions include, *Grand Habitat Horror Vacui*, Flat Time House, London (2024); *No Meat Without Bones*, Belmacz, London (2022); *Mother Mercury*, Art Night, London (2019); *Modified Limited Hangout*, Kunsthalle Wilhelmshaven (2018); *Technocomplex*, Parrotta Contemporary Art, Stuttgart (2017); *Place. Tlomackie 3/5*, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw (2017); *Johanna Jaeger & Agata Madejska*, Kunstraum griffelkunst, Hamburg (2016).

Rechonski (b. 1999, London), studied at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London, UK. Select exhibitions include, *true-believer syndrome*, Gestures, London, UK (2024); *temporal spelunking*, Belmacz, London, UK (2024); *Field Works*, Hoxton Hall (UCL East), London, UK (2024); *Unsafe at any Speed*, Morton St. Partners, New York, USA (2022); *To Live & Think Like Pigs*, SHIFT Cardiff, UK (2022); *mind forg'd manacles*, FILET, London, UK (2021); *unsellable*, JUST/a studio, London, UK (2021); 251st Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK (2019).

Tereza Zelenková (b. 1985 in Ostrava, Czechia) received her MA in Photography from the Royal College of Art in London in 2012. Select exhibitions include, *Memory and desire*, stirring, Fotograf Gallery, Prague, Czechia (2023); *The Maladies of The Infinite*, Cultural Center of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia (2022); *The Double Room*, The Campbell House Museum with Contact Photo Festival, Toronto, Canada (2021); *Known and Strange*, V&A Museum, London, UK (2021-23); SPBH, Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France (2021); *a Handful of Dust*, National Centre for Photography and Images, Taipei, Taiwan (2021); *Le Cabaret du Néant*, Frac île-de-france, Le Château, Paris, France (2020); *A Snake that disappeared through a hole in the wall*, Foam Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2018).

Belmacz is a contemporary art gallery and showroom based in central London. The gallery focuses on supporting artists to grow their practice; working with them to develop specific solo exhibitions and projects, as well as by re-contextualising their work through renowned group exhibitions. Belmacz's showroom is a space dedicated to displaying Julia Muggenburg's jewellery.

Founded in 2000 by Julia Muggenburg, 'Belmacz' is a composite name: combining the male adjective 'bel' (from the French for beautiful), 'maximum,' and 'cz' (from the Slavic alphabet). With a further reference to the iconic 20th century jeweller Suzanne Belperron, 'Belmacz' alludes to Muggenburg's founding vision for the gallery as well as her expansive design practice.

Instagram: [@belmaczlondon](https://www.instagram.com/belmaczlondon)