

MONA
HATOUM

REVISIT

19.02.–15.10.22

MAGASIN III
MUSEUM FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

Dear visitors,

This spring Mona Hatoum's works are simultaneously exhibited at two locations in Stockholm: at Magasin III Museum for Contemporary Art in Frihamnen and at the Accelerator exhibition space on the Stockholm University campus. The project is a way to offer more perspectives for our visitors and a possibility to go deep into the art of Mona Hatoum. The different contexts and focal points of the two venues provide different ways to approach Mona Hatoum's multifaceted body of work, which often revolves around topical political and social themes.

The collection of Magasin III is a source for new presentations and re-interpretations. Over the years the museum has worked with artists whose works are now extensively represented in the collection. From time to time these works are again brought forth and exhibited in relation to what the artists are currently creating. In 2004 Hatoum's artistic production was presented in an extensive exhibition at Magasin III. For the occasion, she created the installation *Undercurrent*, 2004, a so-called Magasin III Production, which has been part of the museum's collection ever since. Now, 18 years later, we revisit the artist's work with a dual-location exhibition project.

The exhibition *Mona Hatoum - Revisit* at Magasin III reflects on a thematic circularity in the artist's oeuvre and her tendency to revisit particular subjects, forms and methods using a variety of materials and scales. For this exhibition, Hatoum has again produced a new work, entitled *Electrified (variable IV)*, 2022, which reconnects with the theme and materials of her earlier work *Undercurrent*. Both installations involve the use of household objects and lightbulbs, illuminated by a fluctuating electric current, a recurring formal device in Hatoum's work which dates back to her early student experimenta-

tions of the late 1970s. *Electrified (variable IV)* is shown alongside a number of other works by Hatoum, some of which are drawn from the Magasin III collection while others have been loaned by the artist. The exhibition aims to provide insight into a practice in which early and recent work, engage with and respond to each other.

At Accelerator, the installation *Undercurrent* will be shown together with two of Hatoum's early video works. The works are linked to a programme of activities in which art and research conduct a dialogue. The university environment provides an opportunity to discuss the major issues and challenges facing society today. In addition to highlighting and illuminating the art on display, Accelerator's programme of activities seeks to foster knowledge exchange and reflect on how art and science address current social issues from the perspective of their individual disciplines. During Hatoum's exhibition we look forward to discussing such topics as migration, identity and (in)security with artists and researchers as well as with students and other interested visitors.

We are delighted to reconnect with Mona Hatoum and her work, which continues to engage and move its audience. In addition, this latest collaboration, which is based on our institutions' respective profiles and focal points, gives us all a fantastic opportunity to explore her oeuvre more deeply, one of the most important and topical of our time. A heartfelt thank you to Mona Hatoum and her team for making these two exhibitions possible.

Richard Julin, Artistic Director, Accelerator

Tessa Praun, Museum Director & Chief Curator, Magasin III

Accelerator and Magasin III share a long history. The idea of building an exhibition space at Stockholm University emerged from the MA programme in Curating Art and from discussions between the university and Magasin III. The project was founded in 2015 by the university's president and the exhibition space was created from a former underground laboratory for research in accelerator physics. The driving force behind Accelerator is to contribute to an open and empathetic society by enabling art to stimulate discussion and interdisciplinary dialogue. Part of Stockholm University, Accelerator opened in September 2019 with a mission to engage actively with society. Magasin III Museum for Contemporary Art and the Robert Weil Family Foundation are Founding Patrons of Accelerator.

Since its inception in 1987, Magasin III has focused on supporting artistic creation and experimentation. In addition to enjoying current exhibitions, visitors can now also learn about the processes involved in preparing future exhibitions, the creation of new works and the care of a collection when not on display. The focus is on fruitful encounters: with art, artists, museum staff and other specialists. Visitors can get access to rooms and witness working processes that are usually not accessible to the public. The aim is to enable a deeper understanding of artistic practice, how creative ideas and visions can take shape, the work of an institution and the artworks in its care and custody.

MONA HATOUM

REVISIT

Since the early 1990s, Mona Hatoum has been regarded as one of the most important artists of our time. Through installation, sculpture, performance, photography, and video, she consistently explores issues of the familiar and the foreign, home and exile, memory and loss. Her multifaceted body of work plays on the tension between these states, as well as on their shifting boundaries. Through alterations in scale and the use of unexpected materials, an object that at first glance seems simply a household utensil can shift its associations to become a threatening tool. Hatoum applies such constantly mutable positions in order to question established truths and perceptions of the world. Her perspective is often that of the individual in relation to institutional structures and to their exercise of violence and power. These questions can be traced back to Hatoum's own experience of exile and alienation, but are nonetheless universal issues of rootlessness, alienation, and loss.

The revisit as a tendency or methodology in Hatoum's work

In the exhibition *Mona Hatoum—Revisit*, the theme of 're-visiting' occurs both in the exhibition's actual format, but also in the works themselves, and in Hatoum's tendency to revisit the same themes and concepts, with a wide variety of processes and materials. The fact that a non-linear working method is here likened to a revisit and not to a return can also be sensed in the ambiguous perspective with which the works are formulated. Unlike a return, a revisit is a temporary condition. It is the perspective of someone who is constantly moving between contexts—a form of rootlessness that can be associated with a state of dislocation. Migrating between places and contexts can also

be traced to modern society's increasingly evident dissolution of the home as an isolated geographical location. In step with globalization and contemporary demands for mobility, the result is an increasingly nomadic relationship to the home—a perspective that is also depicted in Hatoum's work.

Hatoum has selected three earlier works from the Magasin III collection (*Quarters*, 1996; *Vicious Circle*, 1999; *Nature morte aux grenades*, 2006–2007) to form the basis of the exhibition. In the first part of the exhibition, the extensive archival work *Performance Documents*, 1980–1987/2013, is also featured. This introduces Hatoum's early performative practice and demonstrates how it relates to her later sculpture and installation. Hatoum has also created a new work for the exhibition entitled *Electrified (variable IV)*, 2022—an installation which draws on the experiments with kitchen utensils and electricity that she made in her early student years in the late 1970s.

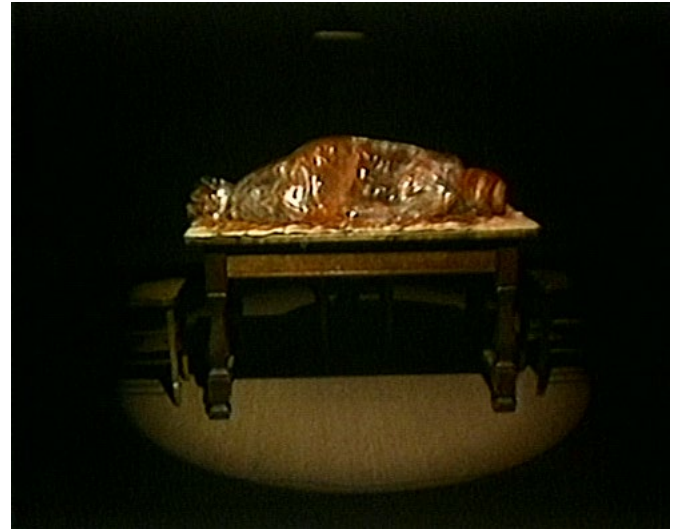
Early performance work—the body as a starting point

Ever since the early 1980s, when Hatoum was working with performance, the body has been a central point of focus. This focus provided Hatoum with a freedom to experiment with techniques, and a form of expression with which to address more explicitly political issues. Her decision to work with performance also had a pragmatic background. As a recent graduate of London's Slade School of Art, she found performance to be a medium she could work in without significant financial resources. In her early performances, Hatoum explored themes of conflict, home and belonging, gender issues and the body—topics that also became fundamental to her subsequent work in sculpture, installation and photography. The actions took place both in the gallery space and within the urban environment. During the period 1980–1987 she created some thirty performance works, twelve of which are collected and

documented in *Performance Documents*. This multi-part work consists of sketches, notes, documentary images, and video documentation of some of these performances or actions. The archival material is accompanied by short descriptions of the works, in which Hatoum herself summarises the actions she undertook. The assembled material provides important insight into Hatoum's preparatory ideas for the works and their actual end result—and, in some cases, includes the audience's reaction and interaction to the work as well.



Variation on Discord and Divisions, 1984



The Negotiating Table, 1983

Architectural structures and the body—a transparent perspective

From her grounding in performance art, Hatoum began working in sculpture and installation in the late 1980s. Despite her departure from the performance medium, her subsequent works often retained a connection to it. Unlike Hatoum's early works, in which she personally performed actions in front of an audience, the focus here shifted from the artist to the audience as the active participant in a physical encounter. Hatoum's sculptures and installations relate to the direct bodily perception of form and spatiality, which adds yet another important dimension to the works.



Quarters, 1996

The massive installation *Quarters*, 1996, consists of a system of bare steel bed frames. The work has an architectural dimension: like two coordinate axes that cross each other, the rows of bed frames extend outwards in four directions. In this case, the beds are not created for comfort; instead, they imply a temporary solution or institutionalised mass housing. *Quarters* is inspired by a squalid prison cell that Hatoum visited at Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia.



Untitled (bed springs) I, 2018



Untitled (bed springs) II, 2018

The construction of the bed is also depicted, this time in the form of bed springs, in the lithographic works *Untitled (bed springs) I*, 2018, and *Untitled (bed springs) II*, 2018. Here, the strict grid pattern, which becomes an abstracted form in *Quarters*, has been distorted like a deformed skeleton shown in an X-ray image. In Hatoum's work, there is a recurring interest in making visible structural systems of various kinds (such as building structures and foundations in public architecture) or the structure of the body, viewed from the inside. In a number of previous works, themes of supervision and the penetrating gaze are conspicuously present.



Don't smile, you're on camera!, 1980

In 1980, she created *Don't smile, you're on camera!*, a live performance whose focus turned from the artist's body to that of the spectator. Interacting with the seated audience, Hatoum moved slowly through the rows of chairs with a video camera connected to a monitor, controlling what was being filmed. The audience could follow along as Hatoum focused the camera shots on the intimate body parts of individual visitors. Technical assistants helped to superimpose close-ups of naked body parts or X-ray images within the live footage. The audience members found themselves in a vulnerable situation as their bodies appeared to be depicted with merciless intimacy. The images of naked body parts implied the camera's ability to get past the clothes to the bare skin, and finally to reveal the body from the inside. Although the work had a playful undertone, the audience was forced to subcon-

sciously assume the roles of both victim and silent abuser. The work brought to mind both the innocent childhood fantasy of X-ray vision as a superpower, as well as the more socio-politically charged issues of control and surveillance. *Don't smile, you're on camera!* is documented in both video and photography in the collected work *Performance Documents*.

Quarters, Untitled (bed springs) I, Untitled (bed springs) II and *Don't smile, you're on camera!* also depict surveillance systems which expose an inner reality—from the naked structure of a bed's frame to body parts in a simulated X-ray function.

Home and alienation

Since Hatoum began using housewares as objects in the late 1980s, they have become even more clearly associated with a type of time-consuming domestic work that no longer has an evident place in our time. The nostalgic mental image of domestic utility wares thus stands in stark contrast to the obviously violent function implied by the sculptures. Right from the start, when Hatoum first began to use housewares in her work, she made them alien. By separating form from function, she created objects on a monumental scale that playfully used the forms of familiar utensils while suggesting a totally different, more violent function.



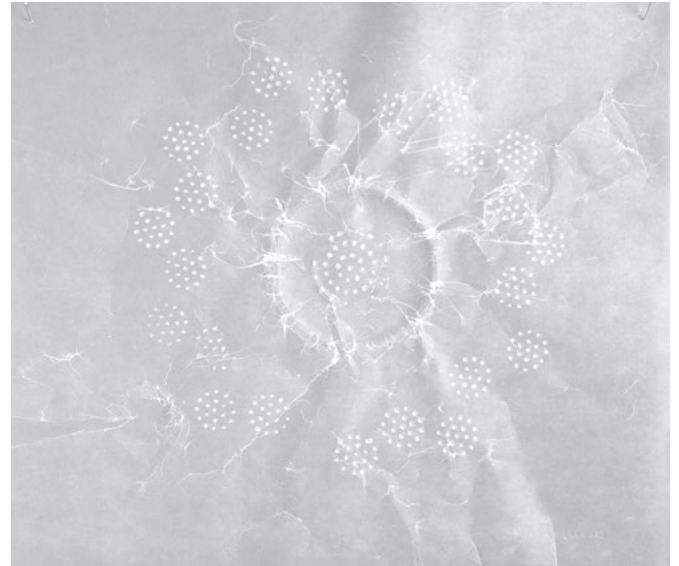
Paravent, 2008



Daybed, 2008

In the sculpture *Paravent*, 2008, a grater has been enlarged in scale so that its form now resembles a room divider which cuts aggressively through space. It is, however, impossible to hide unnoticed behind this screen whose large, perforated cavities form a multitude of peepholes.

The grater reappears in *Daybed*, 2008, this time in the form of a full-scale bed. The idea of the grater's infliction of violence on a resting body is made even more palpable by the sculpture's monumental proportions. Given the inflated scale, it is not difficult to imagine these objects as instruments of torture, ready to effectively tear, cleave or shred.



Untitled (passoire de J-L), 1999

The fascination with the inherent connotations and beauty of kitchen utensils is also present in a series of frottages that Hatoum created during a month-long stay at the Sabbathday Lake Shaker Community in Maine in 1996.

Struck by the beauty of the old handmade kitchen utensils like graters and colanders that were made by the Shakers in the late 19th century, Hatoum made 'drawings' by pressing the implements against Japanese wax paper, to make a tactile rubbing or impression of their perforated surfaces. *Untitled (passoire de J-L)*, 1999, is one such example. The resulting white-on-white images are delicate, like a faint trace of something accidental. She subsequently created a series of similar frottages using her mother's kitchen utensils. The series in this exhibition was made during a residency at Le Creux de L'Enfer in Thiers, an art centre housed in a former knife factory, in the southern part of France.



Baluchi (blue and orange), 2008

Baluchi (blue and orange), 2008, is part of an ongoing series of floor works that Hatoum has created using found, oriental carpets. In this piece, large areas of pile have been painstakingly plucked out of a Baluchi carpet, their shape corresponding to the continents of the world. Hatoum's motif brings to mind a photographic negative which turns the subject of the image inside out. The map depicted is reversed, the recessed landmasses appearing as if they have been worn away, rendered as gaps between solid, intact areas of pile which represent ocean and sea.

In dialogue with the aesthetics of Surrealism and Minimalism

Hatoum's work makes references both to everyday objects from the home and to modern art history—her work is primarily in dialogue with the aesthetics of Minimalism and Surrealism. In direct contrast to Minimalism's concept of form and material as self-referential, Hatoum's work holds layers of possible associations, meanings, and references. The work entitled *Bourj*, 2010 (bourj meaning "tower" in Arabic), was created while Hatoum spent an extended period in her native Beirut in 2010 creating work for a solo exhibition at the Beirut Art Center. The sculpture is composed of rectangular steel tube sections, stacked together and cut and burnt, creating the impression of a war-torn building, stripped to its skeletal structure. The following year, Hatoum created two further sculptures, *Bourj II*, 2011, and *Bourj III*, 2011, which are shown together in this exhibition. The repetitive modular form of the series can be directly linked to Minimalism and to its frequent use of the grid as a formal device and to methods of seriality and repetition.



Bourj A, 2010, *Bourj II*, 2011 and *Bourj III*, 2011



Vicious Circle, 1999

Vicious Circle, 1999, is a sculpture consisting of green wine bottles arranged in a ring on the floor – a visual arrangement to which Hatoum often returns. Placed in tight formation so that the neck of each bottle penetrates the base of the subsequent one – it forms a complete, closed circle, a repetitive pattern that, as its title suggests, references the vicious cycle and physical entrapment of alcohol addiction.

Like the Surrealists, Hatoum has often worked with alterations of scale, unconventional materials and allusions to violence, or the vulnerability of the body (such as in *Paravent* and *Daybed*). Her starting point, however, is in direct contrast to the Surrealists' interest in the subconscious and to their Freudian understanding of human behaviour. Despite Hatoum's seductive materials and shifts of scale, there is no ambition to reach beyond our dimension through art. In-

stead, her aim is to challenge our perception of lived reality by creating a sense of ambiguity and ambivalence, and to make us question the nature of the world we inhabit.

A contradictory relationship with the intrinsic qualities of materials

Hatoum makes use of the inherent properties and associations of the materials she employs. She also often uses materials in a way that directly contravenes these characteristics. A woven textile can comprise of ephemeral and wispy strands of hair, immediately transformed into an abstracted form; sheets of glass, which as a material should be fragile, are used as seats in swings.

The sculpture *Nature morte aux grenades*, 2006–2007, consists of a group of glass objects placed on a sterile stainless-steel rolling table. At first glance, the seductive colourful objects, hand-blown in crystal glass, could be mistaken for bold Christmas-tree ornaments. A closer inspection reveals them to be formed into the shapes of hand grenades. The type of rolling table Hatoum uses is reminiscent of hospitals and morgues—contexts that involve the care and handling of bodies. The title of the work alludes to the ambiguity of the term “Natura Morta,” which refers both to the category of still life motifs and to the literal meaning of “dead nature.”

Electrified (variable IV)

The revisiting of subjects and materials also occurs in Hatoum’s latest work, *Electrified (variable IV)*, 2022, which was created especially for the exhibition. The sculpture consists of several domestic objects: an assemblage of metal kitchen utensils, chairs, scissors etc., strung together in a long line and hung from the ceiling. An electric current courses through them, running to a light bulb which hangs at the bottom. Fluctuating, like a pulsating life force, the current animates the objects while forming a potentially lethal electric circuit.



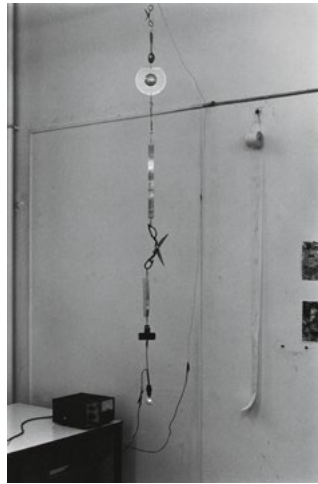
Nature morte aux grenades, 2006–2007

Seemingly playful, using objects that are associated with home, the sculpture is transformed by the current of electricity into a quiet but threatening object. Hatoum created a version of this sculpture as early as 1979, as she began to explore installations that bordered artistic and technological experiments.

The circular movement of the work is expressive of Hatoum's practice in general. The circle may be closed, but there is still the need to explore further—to constantly challenge our perception of what we daily experience.



Electrified (variable III), 2021
© Mona Hatoum.
Photo © White Cube (Theo Christelis)



Untitled, 1979
Installation view Slade School of Fine Art,
London 1979 © Mona Hatoum.
Courtesy the artist

BIOGRAPHY

Mona Hatoum was born in 1952 to a Palestinian family in Beirut, Lebanon. While she was on a short visit to London in 1975, the Lebanese civil war broke out and prevented her from returning home. She has lived in London ever since.

Hatoum has participated in numerous prestigious international including the Venice Biennale (1995 and 2005), Documenta, Kassel (2002 and 2017), Biennale of Sydney (2006), Istanbul Biennial (1995 and 2011) and Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (2013).

Recent solo exhibitions include a major survey organised by Centre Pompidou, Paris (2015), that toured to Tate Modern, London and KI-ASMA, Helsinki (2016), and a US tour initiated by the Menil Collection, Houston (2017), that travelled to the Pulitzer Arts Foundation, St Louis (2018).

She has a long list of international distinctions which include being awarded the Rolf Schock Prize given by the Royal Swedish Academy of Arts (2008), the Joan Miró Prize (2011), the 10th Hiroshima Art Prize (2017) and the Praemium Imperiale (2019). More recently she received the Julio González Prize 2020 from IVAM - Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Valencia, Spain, where she had a large solo exhibition in 2021.

Olga Krzeszowiec Malmsten, Curator

LIST OF WORKS

MONA HATOUM



Baluchi (blue and orange), 2008

Wool

135 x 240 cm

Mona Hatoum Foundation

Image: © Mona Hatoum. Installation view and courtesy IVAM, Institut Valencià d'Art Modern

Photo: Juan García Rosell



Bourj A, 2010, Bourj II, 2011 and Bourj III, 2011

Image: © Mona Hatoum.

Installation view and courtesy MdbK Leipzig

Photo: dotgain.info

Bourj, 2010

Mild steel tubing

152 x 76.5 x 42 cm

Mona Hatoum Foundation

Bourj II, 2011

Mild steel tubing

180 x 75 x 50 cm

Mona Hatoum Foundation

Bourj III, 2011

Mild steel tubing

180 x 80 x 55 cm

Mona Hatoum Foundation



Daybed, 2008

Black finished steel

31.5 x 219 x 98 cm

Mona Hatoum Foundation

Image: © Mona Hatoum

Installation view and courtesy

Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin | Paris

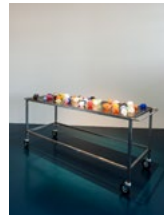
Photo: Jörg von Bruchhausen

Electrified (variable IV), 2022

Kitchen utensils, furniture, electric cable, light bulb, variable transformer

Dimensions variable

Magasin III Production



Nature morte aux grenades, 2006–2007

Crystal, mild steel, and rubber

95 x 208 x 70 cm

Collection Magasin III, Stockholm

Image: © Mona Hatoum

Photo: Christian Saltas



Paravent, 2008

Black finished steel

302 x 215 x 5 cm

Mona Hatoum Foundation

Image: © Mona Hatoum. Installation

view and courtesy Galerie Max Hetzler,

Berlin | Paris. Photo: def image



Quarters, 1996

Mild steel

275.5 x 517 x 517 cm

Collection Magasin III, Stockholm

Image: © Mona Hatoum

Photo: Mattias Givell



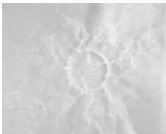
Untitled (bed springs) I, 2018
Litograph on Velin d'Arches paper
119 x 78 cm
Mona Hatoum Studio
Image: © Mona Hatoum
Courtesy Edition Copenhagen
Photo: Lars Gundersen



Untitled (bed springs) II, 2018
Litograph on Velin d'Arches paper
118 x 78 cm
Mona Hatoum Studio
Image: © Mona Hatoum
Courtesy Edition Copenhagen
Photo: Lars Gundersen



Untitled (couteaux étalons thiermois II), 1999
Japanese wax paper
32.5 x 54.5 cm
Mona Hatoum Studio
Image: © Mona Hatoum. Courtesy Le Creux de l'Enfer. Photo: Joël Damase



Untitled (passoire de J-L), 1999
Japanese wax paper
43.5 x 50 cm
Mona Hatoum Studio
Image: © Mona Hatoum. Courtesy Le Creux de l'Enfer. Photo: Joël Damase



Untitled (passoire à queue), 1999
Japanese wax paper
43.5 x 54.5 cm
Mona Hatoum Studio
Image: © Mona Hatoum. Courtesy Le Creux de l'Enfer. Photo: Joël Damase



Untitled (petite passoire à queue), 1999
Japanese wax paper
30 x 46.5 cm
Mona Hatoum Studio
Image: © Mona Hatoum. Courtesy Le Creux de l'Enfer. Photo: Joël Damase



Untitled (râpe cylindrique), 1999
Japanese wax paper
40 x 54.5 cm
Mona Hatoum Studio
Image: © Mona Hatoum. Courtesy Le Creux de l'Enfer. Photo: Joël Damase



Vicious Circle, 1999
Glass bottles
8 x 176 cm diameter
Collection Magasin III, Stockholm
Image: © Mona Hatoum
Photo: Mattias Givell

Performance Documents, 1980-1987/2013

Ten digital prints and four videos

Dimensions variable

Courtesy the Artist and White Cube

The work consists of the following material:

Don't smile, you're on camera!, 1980

Battersea Arts Center, London

Digital print

89.2 x 80.9 cm

Live work for the black room, 1981

Reading University, Reading

Digital print

48.7 x 76 cm

Look No Body!, 1981

The Basement Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Digital print

88.9 x 81.1 cm

Matters of Gravity, 1987

Riverside Studios, London

Digital print

53.5 x 64 cm

Position: Suspended, 1986

Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Digital print

48.9 x 79.8 cm

The Negotiating Table, 1983

The Western Front, Vancouver

Digital print

50.9 x 64.7 cm

Them and Us... and Other Divisions,

1984

South Hill Park Arts Centre,

Bracknell, Berkshire

Digital print

75.2 x 65.7 cm

Under Siege, 1982

Aspex Gallery, Portsmouth

Digital print

65.3 x 76 cm

Unemployed, 1986

Streets of Sheffield

Digital print

49.5 x 57 cm

Video Performance, 1980

Film Makers Co-op, London

Digital print

60.9 x 90.6 cm



Don't smile, you're on camera!

Video documentation of a performance,
March 26, 1980

Battersea Arts Center, London,
11.15 min.

Image: © Mona Hatoum

Courtesy Kunstmuseum St. Gallen.

Photo: Stefan Rohner



The Negotiating Table

Video documentation of
a performance, December 5, 1983
The Western Front, Vancouver,
20.33 min.

Image: © Mona Hatoum

Courtesy the artist



Variation on Discord and Divisions

Video documentation of a performance,
December 14, 1984
The Western Front, Vancouver,
27.45 min.

Image: © Mona Hatoum

Courtesy Kunstmuseum St. Gallen

Photo: Stefan Rohner



Roadworks

Video documentation of
a performance, May 21, 1985
Brixton, London, 6.45 min.

Image: © Mona Hatoum. Courtesy
Kunstmuseum St. Gallen.

Foto: Stefan Rohner

COLOPHON

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Thank you to Mona Hatoum, and to Luís Manuel Araújo and Riet Timmerman at Mona Hatoum Studio and White Cube. Thank you also to former assistant Ida Sjödin, and to Tor Ekdala, Moa Hjärre Nettleton, Hangmen and Informationsteknik for your assistance with the exhibition.

Graphic Design: Ateljé Altmann

Texts: Richard Julin, Olga Krzeszowiec Malmsten and Tessa Praun

Coordination booklet: Lisa Boström and Ida Sjödin

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Print: Printografen AB, Halmstad 2022

Magasin III is an independent cultural institution under the auspices of the privately owned Proventus AB. Also part of the organisation is The Robert Weil Family Foundation, dedicated to public benefit, aiming to promote visual arts, performative disciplines, film, as well as education, democracy and bridging political divides.

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