

Tenant of Culture  
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Image credit: Tenant of Culture, *Flash s/s (series)*, 2020.  
Courtesy the artist and Soft Opening Gallery, London.  
Photo: Theo Christelis

Tenant of Culture, the anonym for Dutch artist Hendrickje Schimmel (b. 1990, Arnhem, Netherlands), will realise an ambitious new site-specific installation for Camden Art Centre, her largest work to-date. The artist's point of departure begins in the archives of the gallery, where she uncovered reference to the largely unrecognised mass labour of women in the laundry industry, in 19th Century Britain.

Huge sculptural forms filling gallery three, comprised of a bespoke hanging system and reminiscent of high-end fashion display mechanisms, will suspend a mass of synthetically coloured textile works consisting of used and reassembled garments. Deconstructed, bleached, re-dyed, re-assembled, wrung-out, pressed, hung and stretched, the sculptures are akin to the methodologies employed in the laundry and textile dye industries. The garments themselves that make up the sculptures are made from repurposed denim, waterproofs and performance-wear that have been treated with acid or enzymes to produce synthetic and toxically bright colours - all materials that take a huge amount of water and chemicals to produce and finish. The artist intentionally steers away from materials that are commonly associated with sustainability as well as romanticised depictions of 'organic' and 'natural' fabrics and colours, instead recycling garments and accessories that are made from plastics and synthetic fibres, dyed in noxious, bright and artificial colours. Large and shapeless in scale and form, at odds with the allure of high-end and fast fashion, the works seek to make visible the industrial scale laundries for the manufacturing of garments and the vast waste as a consequence of such production methodologies.

In researching this process Tenant of Culture discusses a distinct lack of information on the industrial history of fashion and thus highlights the lack of value we place on women's labour: the industry today is still made up of mostly female workers and this process still informs modern day mass production. If capitalism produces a plethora of garments that have some amount of exchange value for a fixed moment in time, and if these items, largely produced by women, soon become waste, where does value sit, who gets to decide, at what cost?

The exhibition draws on and extends the artist's long-standing exploration of consumer culture and the vast and problematic waste accumulated via the fashion industry. Repurposing discarded garments and accessories into new sculptural forms, the resulting works nod to former relics simultaneously desirable and monstrous, a reminder of the unstable cycle of trends and fashion, and the exploitative and often invisible economies of supply and demand.

Tenant of Culture is the third recipient of the Camden Art Centre Emerging Artist Prize at Frieze.

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#### Biography

Tenant of Culture is the artistic practice of Hendrickje Schimmel (b. 1990, Arnhem), who lives and works in London. She received her MA in Mixed Media from the Royal College of Art, London in 2016, and completed a BA in Womenswear at Hogeschool voor de Kunsten, Zwolle, Netherlands in 2012. The artist is currently included in the exhibition Post-digital Intimacy at the National Gallery Prague, Prague. Forthcoming solo and two-person exhibitions include: Camden Art Centre, London (2022); Ivory Tars, Glasgow (2022) with Gillian Lowndes and Soft Opening, London (2023). Recent solo exhibitions include *Et Al.* at Kunstverein Dresden, Dresden (2021); *Autumn Cloth* at Sophie Tappeiner, Vienna (2021); *Georgics (how to style a chore coat)* at Fons Welters, Amsterdam (2020); *I forgot to tell you I've changed* at Het Fries Museum, Leeuwarden (2020); *Eclogues (an apology for actors)* at Nicoletti Contemporary, London (2019); *Works and Days* at Outpost Gallery, Norwich (2018); *Deadstock* at Sarabande Foundation, London (2018); *Climate | Change* at Clearview, London (2017) and *The Latest Thing* at CODE ROOD Koningsweg, Arnhem (2016). Selected group exhibitions include: *Eternally Yours* at Somerset House, London (2022); *Testament* at the Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art, London (2022); *Sartor Resartus*, curated by Jeppe Ugelvig at Huset fur Kunst & Design, Copenhagen (2021); *Getting Dressed* at V.O Curations, London (2021); *LOOK! Exposing Art and Fashion* at Museum Marta Herford, Herford (2021); *Ghosts and Bones* at Galeria Stereo, Warsaw (2021); *Combine* at Fons Welters, Amsterdam (2021); *Fittings with Kinke Kooi* at Exile Gallery, Vienna (2020); *Image Power* at Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem (2020); *Transformers* at Future Gallery, Berlin (2020); *Wearables* at Etage Projects, Copenhagen (2020); *Gubbinal* at Project Native Informant, London (2019); *NEW RUINS* at Soft Opening, London (2019); *Artquest Peer Forum* at Camden Art Centre, London (2018); *Out of Fashion* at Centraal Museum, Utrecht (2017); *Bloomberg New Contemporaries* at Institute of Contemporary Art, London (2016); *Fetishism in Fashion* at MoBA Biennial, Arnhem, (2013). The work of Tenant of Culture is in the collections of the Fries Museum, Leeuwarden; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and The Pier Arts Centre, Orkney. In 2020 Soft Opening published the artist's first monograph in collaboration with Charles Asprey which was one of the winners of the Swiss Most Beautiful Books Award.

#### Camden Art Centre

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