

nography. Many of the individual or collective figures he turns famous for the heterogeneous nature of their work and their tendency to fight the norm. In one of the bigger works or *Proyecto para una alfombra* (Design for a Carpet; all works 20 invoked the Wiener Werkstätte, the alliance of artists active in Vienna in the first decades of the last century that strove to reform the applied arts), Leal installed a pediment, titled *Pirámide, tímpano Memphis* (Pyramid, Tympanon Memphis), that looked far from classic with its rare asymmetry, playful and kitschy chromatic range. It was indeed a nod to the Memphis Group, the 1980s Milanese collaborative founded by Ettore Sottsass who attempted to soften the severity of industrial design. In the end, a number of small works invoked the legacy of the Eameses, definitely the best part of the show, with both abstract and figural works touching on the hybridity of the couple's practice.

In the gallery's main space, three large works—a landscape, a portrait, and an abstraction, all of them related to Leal's varied subject matter of industrial design—summed up Leal's varied subject matter. The portrait, *La pared de Raymond* (Raymond's Wall), eschewed frontality one would expect in favor an odd and oblique angle of *de lápiz* (Pencil Game) evoked a domestic setting with a pool of



the background, some woods. Leal's palette of striking greens and blues in this work appeared at once melancholic and onerous, in a style reminiscent of both Peter Doig and Victor Man. But with his typical grace Leal had painted a Leal wrapping-paper design right on the bottom of the landscape.

—Javier Herrero

WARSAW

Flo Kasearu

ZACHĘTA NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

This show was a spellbinding transformation of reality into fiction, or maybe of fiction into reality. The age-old question of what's real and what's just imagined hardly seemed applicable. Instead, we wondered if it would be possible to salvage even a snippet of reality from the growing tide of fictions. Were we not adrift—and buoyantly, even gleefully so—on that tide, floating deeper and deeper into an invented life? This evanescence of the real—and its reemergence—was at the heart of Flo Kasearu's exhibition "*Me oleme teel*" (We Are on the Way) at Zachęta Project Room in Warsaw, the Tallinn-based artist's first solo show outside her native Estonia.

Flo Kasearu,
Väljakasvanud
(Grown Out), 2013.
C-print, 29½ × 37½".
From the series
"Väljakasvanud"
(Grown Out), 2013.



If there were a "real" in Flo Kasearu's art, it would be the large timber-frame house in Tallinn that was once her grandparents' home but was later expropriated by the Communist government. After the political sea change in Estonia in 1991, the property was restituted to her family. The situation was already pretty surreal: What's a penniless artist going to do with a half-dilapidated house? Her idea was to transform it into a museum dedicated to the art of—who else?—Flo Kasearu. And that's just what she did. The building is now a museum, with an admission desk and a selection of works by the artist, who also maintains a studio and private rooms on-site, as well as a library, a café, a souvenir shop, and a self-portrait bust in the garden.

For the show in Warsaw, Kasearu brought several works from her museum. A magical video (*esc*, 2010) pursues the projection of a galloping white horse along the walls of nocturnal Tallinn. The 2012 video that gave the exhibition its title shows a fire truck, its lights flashing, moving at such a crawl that the idea that its crew might actually put out a fire seems like a wishful fiction. In "*Väljakasvanud*" (Grown Out), 2013—a series of large color photographs—homeless people stand before a snow-covered landscape, wearing wigs in the shapes of houses: the homes they imagine for themselves. And of course the requisite introductory video—*Flo Kasearu majamuuseumi giidituur* (Guided Tour of Flo Kasearu House Museum), 2014—was playing as well. The video looks fictional, but the women seated along a conveyor belt assembling gorgeous objects out of cheap and tacky supplies such as textile flowers and lace really do work in the museum, which also features a giant screen in the yard with a tsunami wave painted on it that hides the ugly buildings on the other side of the fence. In the video, a uniformed guard is seen watching over the museum and garden—suddenly one might have noticed that same guard, wearing the same uniform, here in Warsaw, offering a polite welcome and chatting about his time in the house museum in Tallinn.

Even if you thought at first that you could sort fiction from fact, at a certain point, everything went topsy-turvy. How could we be expected to keep straight that the gentleman working as a guard at Warsaw's Museum Zachęta had traveled to Tallinn to appear in the video, and now, in this exhibition, was starring as a real guard? Was this a real show transfigured into fiction, or just a setup pretending to be an exhibition, or perhaps a pleasant fiction suddenly transmuted into hard reality? All of the above. Its paradoxical nature is what makes Kasearu's art so exciting.

—Noemi Smolik

Translated from German by Gerrit Jackson.