

SONGS FOR SABOTAGE

More than ever, images dominate our reality. The artists in “Songs for Sabotage” treat art as a form of propaganda that turns images on their head in order to reveal the ideologies and built worlds behind them. This tendency echoes the historical notion of sabotage, in which actors impede modes of production from the inside to disturb their normal function. These artists share a concern that entrenched powers of colonialism and institutionalized racism continue to exacerbate inequity. They respond by mapping the violent and isolating effects of these powers on bodies and communities, and by producing objects and images that memorialize individual acts of resistance. They make interventions into cities, infrastructures, and networks embedded in everyday life, proposing objects that might create common experience and disrupt these systems of control.

The artists in “Songs for Sabotage” offer models for dismantling and replacing the political and economic networks that envelop today’s global youth. They are further connected by deep engagement with the specificity of local context, addressing communities and landscapes from Hong Kong to Johannesburg to Athens. At the same time, they adopt a critical examination—and embrace—of the internationalism that links them, finding common cause as a generation living under a shared condition of precarity. Their works range widely in medium and form, including painted allegories for the administration of power, sculptural proposals to renew or destroy monuments, and cinematic works that contend with the ways identity is mobilized in our current era. Viewed in ensemble, these works provide models for working against a system that constantly threatens failure.

“Songs for Sabotage” is the fourth edition of the New Museum Triennial, an exhibition series dedicated to emerging artists from around the world. The exhibition is curated by Gary Carrion-Murayari, Kraus Family Curator, and Alex Gartenfeld, Deputy Director and Chief Curator at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, with Francesca Altamura, Curatorial Assistant.

Lead support is provided by the Friends of the Triennial.

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