

Here, Leckey’s version of the world highlights the mixing of “high” and “low” that is central to his entire oeuvre. Rarefied heritage and pop-culture icons, bona fide artworks, and brand-name mass-produced stuff get tangled up. The cartoon character Felix, represented by both a giant inflatable feline and a can of “Felix” brand cat food, meets a painting by the Renaissance master Piero di Cosimo, represented through a reproduction on a vinyl backdrop. A Nike Transformer shoe meets the ancient naked figure known as the Cerne Abbas Giant, whose outline is reproduced on the wall of the “monster” room. And if *The Universal Addressability of Dumb Things* was an exhibition curated by Leckey, *UniAddDumThs*, its copy at Kunsthalle Basel, is something like a total artwork authored by Leckey, although a “gauzified” one, that raises irreverent questions about what aura, authenticity, and authorship could mean in our 21st century, Internet-driven, post-digital age.

Mark Leckey was born 1964 in Birkenhead, UK; he lives and works in London.

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# Mark Leckey

## *UniAddDumThs*

### 6 Mar – 31 May 2015

*UniAddDumThs* is a new installation by Mark Leckey that is ambiguously—and provocatively—both an exhibition the artist curated and an artwork he authored. Many years in the making, the project finds its roots in an exhibition that the British artist curated in 2013. That show was based on the contents of Leckey’s hard drive, which contained digital images of archaic exotica, artworks, and visionary machines he’d collected from the Internet, then placed in folders named “man,” “machine,” and “animal” (also “monster,” which is, according to the artist, a subset of “man”)—his own strange and personal classification system for the world. Each digital file corresponded to some item—a real thing—which was tracked down for the show and bought or borrowed from institutions far and wide. Leckey called the result *The Universal Addressability of Dumb Things*, and for the duration of that exhibition, the virtual became actual, and ranged from some perfectly ordinary things to some unbelievably extraordinary ones. Among them: a mandrake root “miraculously” taking a human form; an Egyptian mummified cat; a uterus-shaped vase; a 13th-century silver reliquary in the shape of a hand; a giant can of “Felix” brand cat food; the i-limb ultra, the most technologically advanced prosthetic hand on the market; and the giant rocking phallus featured in the film *A Clockwork Orange*. These things and more rubbed shoulders with ancient, modern, and contemporary artworks by William Blake, Louise Bourgeois, Jim Shaw, and Ed Atkins, among others. The presentation was a surrealist-inspired display that juxtaposed unlikely combinations of artifacts according to the artist’s very particular classification system and logic.

At Kunsthalle Basel, Leckey presents an “ersatz” version of that show that is composed mostly of copies, from 3D printed objects to 2D cardboard cutouts, photographic reproductions, and other replicas of the original objects. He calls it *UniAddDumThs*, a shortened, sort of filename-extension version of the original title (as “mpeg” is to “motion picture expert group”). Much of what was formerly unique, rarified, and original is here duplicated: the mummified cat appears in a cotton and wood version, the 13th-century silver reliquary as a larger-than-life cardboard cutout, the Louise Bourgeois sculpture as a digitally scanned 3D printout.

And if the artifact wasn’t a unique object to begin with, such as the store-bought speaker in the shape of a dog’s body, called the “Woofier,” it reappears in its already mass-produced form. With *UniAddDumThs*, Leckey attempts to return the once-“real” borrowed artworks and artifacts back to their status as digital information in a new exhibition of ontologically liminal stuff.

Hollow or flat, oddly textured, and often looking like the cheap substitutes they indeed are, Leckey likes that his replicas appear weirdly lifeless as they sit between worlds, belonging as much, if not more, to the digital realm as to the material one. In fact, the transmutation of the exhibition from digital files on the artist’s hard drive to real (in *The Universal Addressability of Dumb Things*) and then from that “real” to its simulacrum (*UniAddDumThs*) follows the appeal made by the Hungarian artist Karoly Tamkó Sirtó, author of the Dimensionist Manifesto of 1936 which Leckey cites in his lecture “In the Long Tail,” for sculpture to be “vaporized” such that “rigid matter is abolished and replaced by gauzefied materials.” Thus even the scenography of Leckey’s new Kunsthalle Basel exhibition is a form of “vaporized” copy. Whereas the earlier scenography involved custom-built wooden display structures corresponding to each of Leckey’s main subject “categories” (man, machine, animal), here they are printed vinyl backdrops suspended from metal rods, with floating inflatable lighting overhead—a softer, more seemingly airy and ad hoc version.

Following a process of sampling, collecting, appropriating, and “aggregating” (Leckey’s term) that has been central to his work from its very beginnings, *UniAddDumThs* reveals much about the artist’s thinking and practice—his persistent fascination with things as much as with technology, the Internet, and the slippery relationship between the real and its simulacrum. It is no wonder that Leckey is so influential to a younger generation of artists who finds in his work a pioneering attempt to address how the products of contemporary technological advances construct our identities, memories, and desires. *UniAddDumThs* is a lesson about this, and, indeed, about all systems of order: how they depend entirely on the individual who categorizes them, and how they organize the universe in unexpected ways.

## Kunsthalle Basel

LIST OF WORKS

Mark Leckey  
*UniAddDumThs*, 2014 – 15  
 Copy of Mark Leckey's *The Universal Addressability of Dumb Things* (2013)  
 Comprised of the following elements

STAIRS

*Felix the Cat*, 2014  
 Nylon fabric  
 Max ca. 10 • 5 m  
 Courtesy Mark Leckey; Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York; Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne; Cabinet, London

Kopie von  
 Otto Messmer's *Felix the Cat Doodle* (ca. 1920er Jahre), 2014

Druck  
 18,5 • 13,5, gerahmt  
 Courtesy Mark Leckey; Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York; Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne; Cabinet, London

Collection of offerings to *Felix the Cat*  
 Mixed media

Copy of  
 GtsMod's *Giantess DOA Girls GMod (and surprise)* (2011)  
 Video, color, silent  
 4'26", loop

Copy of  
 Matthew Noel-Tod's *Castle 3.0* (2012)  
 Video, color, silent  
 20'53", loop

1ST FLOOR  
 From right to left, per room

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*LED 1 from The Universal Addressability of Dumb Things*, 2014  
 Looped video, color, silent; LED screen  
 176,5 • 128,9 • 7,6 cm  
 Collection Ara Arslanian

MAN

Backdrop: Montage of Peter Coffin's *Untitled (shoe)* (2009) with an image by Why Not Associates of a Henry Moore, 2015  
 PVC; light tube, neon tubes, nylon fabric  
 495 • 500 cm, 350 • 100 • 100 cm

Ed Atkins  
*Hair by Ed*, 2013  
 Video, color, silent  
 5'14", loop  
 Courtesy Ed Atkins

*Hip Bone*, 2014  
 3D photopolymer print, 17,8 • 10,2 • 10,2 cm

Copy of  
 Herman Makkink's *Rocking Machine* (1969–70), 2014  
 Urethane foam, 33 • 81,3 • 45,7 cm

Copy of  
 Jim Shaw's *Dream Object (Digestive Tract Sculpture)* (2007), 2014  
 3D photopolymer print, 8 • 124,5 • 60 cm

Copy of  
 Cyberman *Helmet* (ca. 1985), 2014  
 3D powder/pigmented binder print,  
 45,7 • 36,8 • 33 cm; sound

Copy of  
 Mark Leckey's *Leckey Legs*, 2014  
 3D photopolymer print, 48,3 • 25,4 • 15,2 cm

Copy of  
 William Blake's *Death Mask* (1827), 2013  
 Electrodes, plaster, 28 • 15 • 23 cm

Copy of a singing gargoyle, England (ca. 1200), 2014  
 3D powder/pigmented binder print,  
 27,9 • 36,8 • 30,5 cm; sound

Copy of  
 The Plug & Stéphanie Rollin's *Uterus Vase* (2008), 2013  
 3D photopolymer print  
 23 • 40 • 9 cm  
 Shown on a plinth inspired by  
 Martin Kippenberger's *Familie Hunger* (1985), 2014  
 Papier mâché, wire

United Nude  
*Lo Res Shoe*, 2012  
 Semi-transparent smoke rubber, molded flexible thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU), leather sock  
 15,2 • 22,9 • 8,9 cm  
 Shown on a plinth inspired by  
 Martin Kippenberger's *Familie Hunger* (1985), 2014  
 Papier mâché, wire

Copy of  
 Toyen's *Object-Phantom* (1937), 2014  
 Reproduction print, 61,6 • 82,6 cm

MACHINE

*Rockdrill*, 2004  
 Inkjet on paper, 134,6 • 101,6 cm

Backdrop: Copy of Drawings by Terry Gilliam, 2015  
 PVC; light tube, neon tubes, nylon fabric  
 495 • 500 cm, 350 • 100 • 100 cm

*Untitled (Pylon orange)*, 2013  
 Print on cardboard, sound actuator,  
 160 • 110 • 110 cm; sound

Lego  
*Lego Maersk*, 2013  
 20,3 • 68,6 • 15,2 cm

Wurlitzer  
*SideMan Drum Machine*, 1959-65  
 Glass, metal, plastic, wood,  
 60 • 30 • 110 cm; sound

Copy of  
 Miroslav Tichý's *Homemade Camera* (1960s), 2014  
 2 3D powder/pigmented binder prints

Formlabs  
*3D Printer*, 2014  
 27,5 • 45,5 • 29,7 cm  
 Courtesy Formlabs

Copy of  
 Richard Hamilton's *Diab DS-101 Computer* (1985–89), 2014  
 Print on cardboard, 53 • 74 • 51 cm

Copy of  
 Nissan's *Design Centre Clay Concept Car 1/4 Scale*, 2014  
 Urethane foam, 16 anti-stress foam bricks  
 31,8 • 96,5 • 43,2 cm

Copy of  
 Miroslav Tichý's *Homemade Camera* (1960s), 2014  
 2 3D powder/pigmented binder prints  
 10,2 • 26,7 • 20,3 cm

Copy of  
 John Gerrard's *Lufking (near Hugo, Colorado)* (2009), 2015  
 Video, color, sound  
 25", loop  
 Shown on car headrest, chrome, DVD player, headphones, metal, screen  
 Courtesy Mark Leckey; Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York; Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne; Cabinet, London

Copy of  
 Ferrofluid *Brunnen 1* (2010)  
 Video, color, sound  
 2'24", loop  
 Shown on car headrest, chrome, DVD player, headphones, metal, screen  
 Courtesy Mark Leckey; Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York; Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne; Cabinet, London

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*LED 2 from The Universal Addressability of Dumb Things*, 2014  
 Looped video, color, silent; LED screen  
 176,5 • 128,9 • 7,6 cm

*Venice Standee – Green*, 2014  
 Cardboard standee, 194 • 170 • 110 cm

*Untitled (Pylon blue)*, 2013  
 Print on cardboard, sound actuator,  
 160 • 110 • 110 cm; sound

ANIMAL

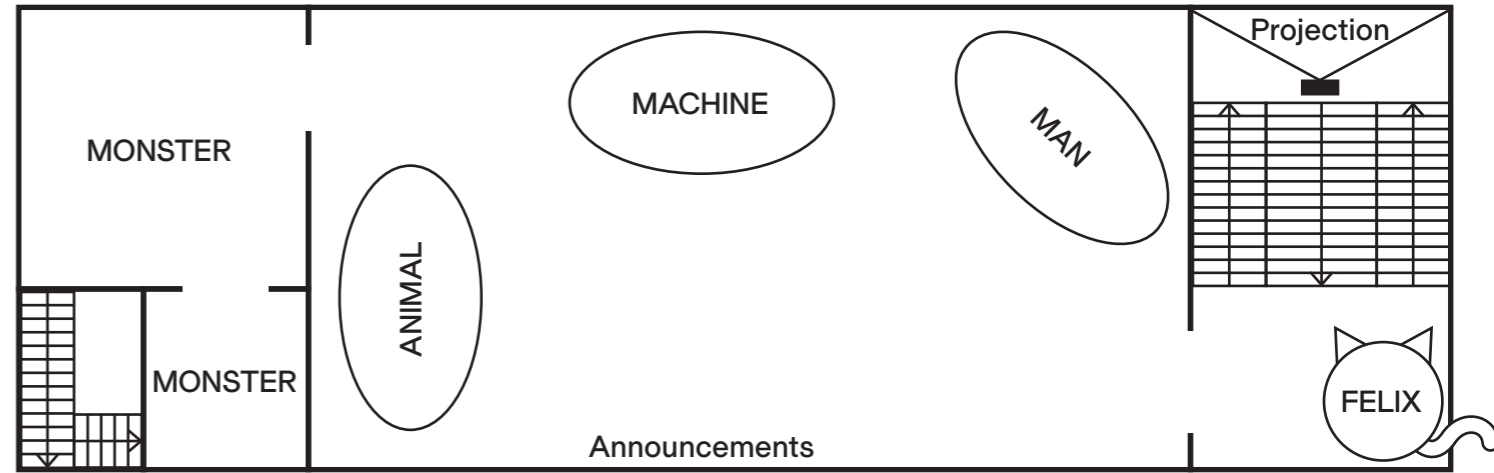
Backdrop: Copy of Piero di Cosimo's *The Forest Fire* (1505), 2015  
 PVC; light tube, neon tubes, nylon fabric  
 495 • 500 cm, 350 • 100 • 100 cm

Copy of a Boli, 2014  
 Compost, plaster, wire, 66 • 82 • 31 cm

Copy of  
 Elad Lassry's *Devon Rex*, 2014  
 Reproduction print, 43,2 • 35,6 cm

Copy of a 1st century mummified cat, 2015  
 Balsa wood, calico, ca. 15 • 40 • 10 cm

Copy of  
 Robert Wilson's *Boris (Porcupine)*  
 From the series *VOOM Portraits* (2006)  
 Video, color, sound  
 8'55", loop



Sander Mulder  
*Woofers*, 2005  
 Amp, rotomolded plastic, speaker; sound  
 50,8 • 29,2 • 43,2 cm

Copy of  
 Nicola Hicks' *Maquette Head for Crouching Minotaur* (2002–03), 2014  
 Five axis CNC, urethane foam, 67 • 61 • 52 cm

Copies of a Hapi Canopic Jar (ca. 664–332 B.C.), 2014  
 3D powder/pigmented binder print  
 34,5 • 17 • 17 cm

Large tin of "Felix" brand cat food, 2013  
 15 • 15 • 15 cm

Copy of  
 David Musgrave's *Animal* (1998), 2014  
 3D powder/pigmented binder print  
 2 parts; 22,9 • 14 • 2,5 cm

Copy of  
 Max Ernst's *The Elephant of Celebes* (1921), 2013  
 Cardboard cutout, 162,6 • 144,8 • 25,4 cm

Copy of  
 Seth Eastman's *Symbolic Petition of the Chippewa Chiefs* (1849), 2014  
 Reproduction print, 98,4 • 71,1 cm

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Copy of  
 Touch Bionics' *i-Limb Ultra Prosthetic Hand*, 2013  
 Cardboard cutout, 198,1 • 88,9 • 20,3 cm

*Documentation of The Universal Addressability of Dumb Things*, 2013  
 Video, color, silent  
 17'17", loop

Copy of a 13th century silver reliquary hand, 2013  
 Cardboard cutout, 198,1 • 88,9 • 20,3 cm

*Venice Standee – Blue*, 2013  
 Cardboard standee, 169 • 219 • 67 cm

*Socialist Review* (2013), 2015  
 Print, paper, 59,4 • 84,1 cm

Kevin Love  
*The Universal Addressability of Dumb Things, Nottingham Contemporary, 14 May 2013*, 2013  
 Video, color, sound  
 9'34", loop

*Prp4AShow*, 2010–13  
 Video, color, sound  
 3'38", loop

*Artforum* (2013), 2015  
 Print, paper, 59,4 • 84,1 cm

MONSTER

Wall Drawings:  
 Copy of André Masson's *Acéphale Cover*  
 From the first issue of *Acéphale*, a review created a.o. by Georges Bataille in 1936

Copy of *Cerne Abbas Giant*, Cerne Abbas, Dorset, England, first mentioned 17th century

Copy of Joey's *Joey the Mechanical Boy* (ca. 1959)

Copy of Male Mandrake Root  
 From Jacob Meydenbach's *Ortus Sanitatis (Garden of Health)*, Herbal, first printed in 1491

*Bourgeois/Cyberman*, 2014  
 3D powder/pigmented binder print  
 61 • 23,8 • 31,4 cm

Brian Bress  
*Beadman (Parker)*, 2012  
 HD video, color, silent; HD monitor, player  
 1'06", loop; 128,5 • 82,3 cm  
 Courtesy Brian Bress, Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles

Florian Hecker  
*Chimerization*, 2012  
 3-channel electroacoustic sound, loud-speaker system  
 Courtesy Florian Hecker; Sadie Coles HQ, London

Copy of  
 Louise Bourgeois' *NATURE STUDY* (1984), 2014  
 3D powder/pigmented binder print  
 76,2 • 38,1 • 53,3 cm

Tim Bacon  
*Nature Study / Granular Tests*, 2015  
 Video, color, silent  
 1', loop

Video box of Aphex Twin's *Windowlicker* album cover, 2013  
 Perspex  
 120 • 67 • 25 cm

Copy of Mandrake Root (1501–1700), England, 2014  
 3D photopolymer print  
 47 • 12,7 • 10,2 cm

Copy of a sculpture from Michoacán, Mexico (20th century), 2014  
 3D powder/pigmented binder print  
 43,2 • 15,2 • 7,6 cm

*Dog / Vase*, 2014  
 3D photopolymer print  
 61 • 55,2 • 34,9 cm

*Cock/Head*, 2014  
 3D photopolymer print  
 61 • 30,5 • 33 cm

Copy of  
 William Blake's *The Ghost of a Flea* (1819–20), 2012  
 Lightbox  
 180 • 120 cm

Nike  
*Transformer Shoe*, 2013  
 Mixed Media  
 Open 14 • 15,5 • 13 cm

*Monk X-ray*, 2013  
 Reproduction print, X-ray of polychrome wooden sculpture of "Saint John of the Cross" (1675) by Francisco Antonio Ruiz Gijón  
 41,9 • 25,4 cm

*Larger Squat Afar*, 2013  
 3D print  
 23 • 18 • 12 cm  
 Courtesy Mark Leckey

All elements, unless otherwise noted:  
 Courtesy Mark Leckey, Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York and Cabinet, London