

WHITE CUBE



TARWUK

Conceived for the Stage
17 October - 2 December 2023
White Cube Paris

TARWUK

White Cube Paris is pleased to present 'Conceived for the Stage', an exhibition by TARWUK featuring paintings, works on paper, sculptures and newly fabricated illuminating orbs. In the installation, the duo reimagines the formal conventions of traditional theatre, transforming the gallery into a metaphysical domain of real-time performance, where both objects and visitors assume roles of a troupe of performers and the audience.

Croatian-born artists, TARWUK, operate as a collaborative entity whose practice is informed by a common purpose: experimenting with Selfhood. It is a quest that is inferred from broad and unexpected associations of histories, iconographies, subjectivities and cultures. Their references range from pop culture and art history, taking in Japanese anime, Yugoslav cinema, early Renaissance painting, late 19th-century Symbolism and early 20th-century Modernism. Through their shared receptivity to historical and contemporaneous imagery, TARWUK navigate the intricate interplay of identity, selfhood, life and art, engendering in their work a simultaneous criticality and performance of life in collaboration.

Illuminating the works in 'Conceived for the Stage' are a series of eight handcrafted glass orbs, whose form and design were given to them in a dream. They were loosely based on an original series of Bauhaus lamps from the 1930s that TARWUK had used in their previous installation. Used to light the large-scale paintings depicting conferences of characters engaging in intimate moments of theatre, the soft radiance of the orbs provides a heightened emotional ambience to the individual paintings and exhibition as a whole. In *MRTISKLAAH_erohs_naibreiT_a_nO* (2023) the viewer witnesses a tender encounter between two lovers in which additional supporting characters dance and writhe against an elaborate, palimpsestic backdrop adorned with brocade motifs and ornate floral decorative symbols.

The largest painting in the show, *MRTISKLAAH_egatS_ehT* (2023), unfolds across three panels: the central panel sets the stage for the painting's focal action, depicting actors mingling with audience members, with the roles of observer and actor becoming increasingly blurred. In contrast, the panels to the left and right serve as 'curtains', framing the scene with roaming configurations of concentric shapes that introduce a degree of separation to the central activity. This framing serves to trouble the distinction between staged and unstaged theatre and what constitutes 'artifice'.

TARWUK's practice is rooted in the performative, where dissonant narratives are embodied in sculptural material and figurative compositions, bearing both a sense of expansive childhood play and psychoanalytical stoicism. Having come of age during the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s, TARWUK's organic process evolves from a singular perspective: 'The world that you think you are part of is constantly changing, and there is very little you can do to keep it together. Maybe that state of mind made us more nihilistic, or maybe it prepared us to leave the known behind.' In 2021, amid the pandemic lockdowns, TARWUK initiated their 'Moon Sessions'. Over the course of an entire lunar calendar, during each new moon cycle, the artists engaged in private performances. They donned masks and costumes, responding to the evolving atmospheric moods of one another, each time in front of the same, newly repainted backdrop. Twice they embodied characters from televised and cinematic narratives, such as the mecha-anime series *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and the 1986 Croatian animated musical film *Čudesna šuma* (*The Elm-Chanted Forest*), both of which are alluded to in this exhibition.

An atmosphere of private performance permeates TARWUK's works on paper, directing a more focused attention towards the characters' movement within space and their relationships to each other. With eyes closed and bodies intertwined in serpentine embrace, the characters evade the onlooker's gaze, appearing immersed in introspective reverie. Evoking an oneiric quality, *TROOZ_sgninaem_dexif_dna_mrof_citats_eht_ot_htaeD* (2021) unites a discordant ensemble of characters on stage. Green, otherworldly bodies commune with members of the religious clergy – some appearing human, others adopting a porcine visage – and phantom faces lurk in the background. The incongruity of the troupe and the question of their relevance to the scene are elucidated in the work's lower section, where the sleeping protagonist lies supine, conjuring the surreal tableaux through a dream.

Coaxing the exhibition into the physical realm, TARWUK's new series of sculptures comprises three smaller works, as well as a larger multi-part sculpture titled *KLOSKAS_yaIP_eht_dna_sreyalP_ehT_teop_ehT* (2023). Within the latter, two protagonists engage in an imagined cross-temporal dialogue. In one corner, an elegant figure is seated on a wooden chair, attired in a custom ensemble crafted from a Yugoslav worker's uniform and a handsewn Edwardian dress, which joins down the middle to create a single

TARWUK

garment. Opposite the figure, its companion, painted on canvas, assumes its place on an art-nouveau style metal wire 'chair'. Arranged throughout the space on plinths, the three smaller sculptures form part of an unfinished costume. Synthetic clay hands, detached from a body, rest motionless, while torn leather shoes sprout biomorphic formations of leather, metal, velvet, clay and cotton, forging landscapes of uncanny growth.

Within the dramatic framework of 'Conceived for the Stage', TARWUK explore the inherent fiction of realism through expressions of heightened artifice and sprawling metamorphosis. Evoking previous engagements with the constitution of the self in society, or post-history and spectres of the past, TARWUK create a fictive narrative of restless human expression in which the viewer is implicated.

To mark the occasion of the show, White Cube and TARWUK are publishing an edition of 100 Riso-printed books, which serves as both a guide and a libretto for the exhibition, 'Conceived for the Stage'. The book is designed in collaboration with Timur Akhmetov and includes a text by Elizaveta Shneyderman, as well as a libretto written with the guidance of Fetva, a Moldovan psychoanalyst and Parisian DJ.

TARWUK

MRTISKLAAH_egatS_ehT

2023

Acrylic, charcoal, colour pencil and oil on canvas

Overall: 152.4 x 366.8 cm | 60 x 144 7/16 in.

155.5 x 369.5 x 6.5 cm | 61 1/4 x 145 1/2 x 2 9/16 in. (framed)

Click [HERE](#) to view a video of this work



TARWUK







TARWUK

MRTISKLAAH_evoL_fo_ecalaP_eht_ni_gniwolb_saw_dniw_lanrac_A
2023

Acrylic, charcoal, colour pencil and oil on canvas

152.4 x 152.4 cm | 60 x 60 in.

155 x 155 x 5 cm | 61 x 61 x 1 15/16 in. (framed)





TARWUK

MRTISKLAAH_thguohT_gnilevelnU

2023

Acrylic, charcoal, colour pencil and oil on canvas

152.4 x 152.4 cm | 60 x 60 in.

155 x 154.7 x 5 cm | 61 x 60 7/8 x 1 15/16 in. (framed)



TARWUK





TARWUK

MRTISKLAAH_dhab_ehT

2023

Acrylic, charcoal, colour pencil and oil on canvas

152.4 x 152.4 cm | 60 x 60 in.

155.3 x 154.5 x 5 cm | 61 1/8 x 60 13/16 x 1 15/16 in. (framed)







TARWUK

MRTISKLAAH_erohs_nairebiT_a_nO

2023

Acrylic, charcoal, colour pencil and oil on canvas

152.4 x 152.4 cm | 60 x 60 in.

155 x 155 x 5 cm | 61 x 61 x 1 15/16 in. (framed)

Click [HERE](#) to view a video of this work





TARWUK

MRTISKLAAH_rteP

2023

Acrylic, charcoal, colour pencil and oil on canvas

152.4 x 152.4 cm | 60 x 60 in.

155.4 x 154.7 x 5 cm | 61 3/16 x 60 7/8 x 1 15/16 in. (framed)



TARWUK





TARWUK

UNEAS_OltejvS_elbatneserpernu_si_efiL

2023

Edition of 8

Mixed media

61 x 25 x 33 cm | 24 x 9 13/16 x 13 in.





TARWUK

KLOSKLAS_yalP_eht_dna_sreyalP_ehT_,teop_ehT
2023

Mixed media

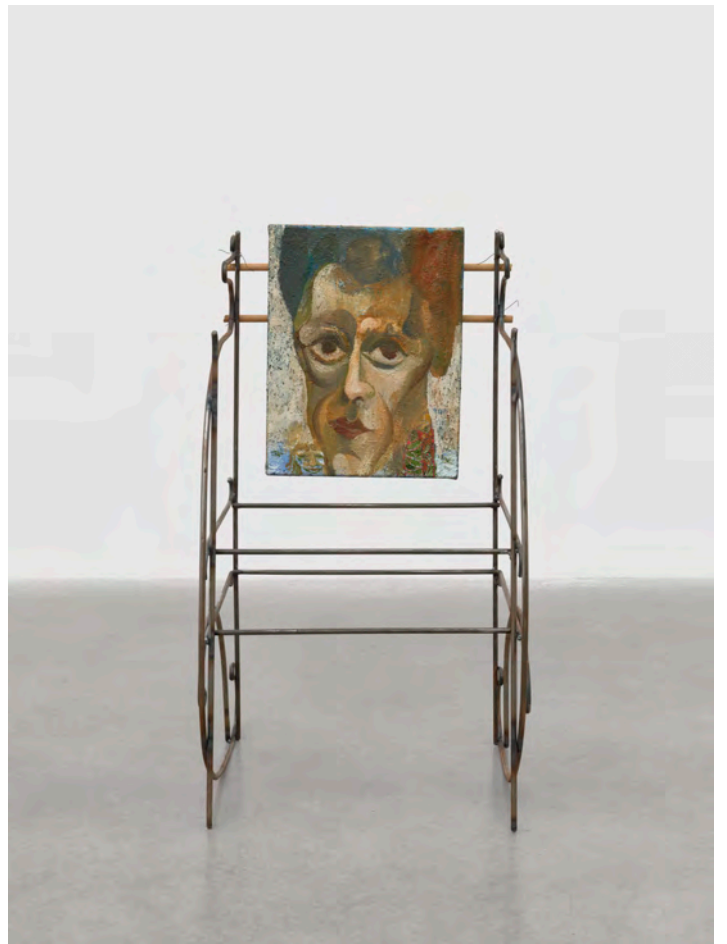
Dimensions variable

Click [HERE](#) to view a video of this work





TARWUK





TARWUK

KLOSKLAS_1_dioV_citsemoD_elbatneserpernu_si_efiL

2023

Mixed media

29.5 x 40.4 x 21 cm | 11 5/8 x 15 7/8 x 8 1/4 in.

Click [HERE](#) to view this work in 3D and Augmented Reality





TARWUK





TARWUK

KLOSKLAS_2_dioV_citsemoD_elbatneserpernu_si_efiL
2023

Mixed media

50.3 x 39 x 23 cm | 19 13/16 x 15 3/8 x 9 1/16 in.

Click [HERE](#) to view this work in 3D and Augmented Reality



TARWUK





TARWUK



TARWUK

KLOSKLAS_snoitcartsbagnibircsed_fo_daetsni_serised_gnicudorP
2023

Mixed media

16.5 x 59.7 x 25.9 cm | 6 1/2 x 23 1/2 x 10 3/16 in.

Click [HERE](#) to view this work in 3D and Augmented Reality



TARWUK





TARWUK

TROOZ_II_enecS

2020

Gesso, colour pencil, graphite on paper

30.5 x 22.9 cm | 12 x 9 in.

37.9 x 30.4 x 4 cm | 14 15/16 x 11 15/16 x 1 9/16 in. (framed)





3x

20 pedup

30

45

40



b

straw

TARWUK

TROOZ_.l.enecS

2020

Gesso, colour pencil and graphite on paper

30.5 x 22.9 cm | 12 x 9 in.

38 x 30.3 x 4 cm | 14 15/16 x 11 15/16 x 1 9/16 in. (framed)



TARWUK

TROOZ_erusolc_evitarran_ot_ecnatsiser_lacitiloP

2023

Graphite and colour pencil on paper

27.9 x 21.6 cm | 11 x 8 1/2 in.

35.4 x 29 x 4 cm | 13 15/16 x 11 7/16 x 1 9/16 in. (framed)



TARWUK

TROOZ_eriseD_fo_etatS_tnatsnoC

2023

Ink, acrylic, gesso on paper

29.8 x 21.0 cm | 11 3/4 x 8 1/4 in.

37 x 28 x 4 cm | 14 9/16 x 11 x 1 9/16 in. (framed)





TARWUK

TROOZ_deifitsymeD_tcejbuS_ehT

2021

Graphite and ink on paper

22.9 x 22.9 cm | 9 x 9 in.

30.4 x 30.4 x 4 cm | 11 15/16 x 11 15/16 x 1 9/16 in. (framed)



TARWUK

TROOZ_yteicoS_dezitamarD

2023

Graphite, ink and acrylic on paper

30.5 x 22.9 cm | 12 x 9 in.

37.9 x 30.3 x 4 cm | 14 15/16 x 11 15/16 x 1 9/16 in. (framed)



TARWUK

TROOZ_tneserp_eht_ni_syawla_si_gninaeM

2023

Gesso, pencil, watercolour and pastel on paper

29.8 x 21 cm | 11 3/4 x 8 1/4 in.

37.1 x 28.4 x 4 cm | 14 5/8 x 11 3/16 x 1 9/16 in. (framed)



TARWUK



TARWUK

TROOZ_msiciripmE_lacidaR

2021

Graphite, gesso and ink on paper

42.5 x 50.8 cm | 16 3/4 x 20 in.

50.6 x 59 x 4 cm | 19 15/16 x 23 1/4 x 1 9/16 in. (framed)



TARWUK

TROOZ_(tuo mooz)_msiciripmE_lacidaR

2021

Graphite, gesso and ink on paper

53.3 x 63.5 cm | 21 x 25 in.

61.5 x 71.6 x 4 cm | 24 3/16 x 28 3/16 x 1 9/16 in. (framed)



TARWUK

TROOZ_sgninaem_dexif_dna_mrof_citats_eht_ot_htaeD

2021

Graphite, colour pencil, acrylic, oil, gesso and ink on paper

61.0 x 80.6 cm | 24 x 31 3/4 in.

69.2 x 89 x 4 cm | 27 1/4 x 35 1/16 x 1 9/16 in. (framed)





TARWUK

BIOGRAPHY

TARWUK (Bruno Pogačnik Tremow and Ivana Vukšić) were born in 1981 in Zagreb and Dubrovnik, Croatia respectively and live and work in New York, NY. They have exhibited internationally, including solo exhibitions at the Halle für Steiermark, Graz, Austria (2023); Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy (2021) and Museum of Fine Art, Osijek, Croatia (2017). Their work has been included in numerous group exhibitions amongst which are Lafayette Anticipations, Paris (2023); Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga (2023); Frye Art Museum, Seattle, WA (2022); Kunsthalle Wichita, KS (2021); and the Drava Art Biennale, Osijek, Croatia (2020).



Photo © TARWUK

TARWUK

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

The Bunker, West Palm Beach, Miami, Florida
Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy
K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong
Marciano Art Foundation, Los Angeles, California
Museum of Fine Arts, Osijek, Croatia
TANK Shanghai, China
Thomas J. Watson Library, The Metropolitan
Museum of Art, New York
Xiao Museum of Contemporary Art, Rizhao, China
Zabludowicz Collection, London

GALLERY INFORMATION

BERMONDSEY, LONDON

144 – 152 Bermondsey Street
London SE1 3TQ
+44 (0) 207 930 5373

Opening Times:
Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm
Sunday, 12 – 6pm

MASON'S YARD, LONDON

25 – 26 Mason's Yard
London SW1Y 6BU
+44 (0) 207 766 3550

Opening Times:
Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm

PARIS

10 avenue Matignon
75008 Paris
By appointment

Opening Times:
Tuesday – Saturday, 11am – 7pm

NEW YORK

1002 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10075

Opening Times:
Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm

HONG KONG

50 Connaught Road Central
Hong Kong
+ 852 2592 2000

Opening Times:
Tuesday – Saturday, 11am – 7pm

SEOUL

6, Dosan-daero 45-gil
Seoul
+82 (0)2 6438 9093

Opening Times:
Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm