

# BUREAU

3 Hardman Square

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## *On Physical Work*

Assunta Ruocco, Evangelia Spiliopoulou

25 October to 29 November 2013

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*“In the novel ‘Molloy’ by Samuel Beckett there is a passage where the main character, Molloy, engages in an interesting activity. He sucks stones collected from a beach. His goal is to find the perfect solution that would allow him to suck each and every one of his sixteen stones successively, without repetitions, nor missing any of them. A seven page long description follows of the strategies he chooses to adopt. The stones travel across his body, to each of the four available pockets in his coat and trousers in succession. For every stone he sucks, fifteen change position, taking part in a laborious circular flux, accompanied by what Molloy calls enjoyment...”*

**Bureau is pleased to announce the latest exhibition at 3 Hardman Square, *On Physical Work*, featuring new works by Assunta Ruocco and Evangelia Spiliopoulou. Both artists have recently developed practices reliant on, and in response to, external and self-imposed systems and structures. The works in the exhibition deal with process, repetition (cyclical actions or ‘reproduction’) and time, and in relating to manual labour posit the artist as ‘worker’ (or agent).**

**Assunta Ruocco** has a particular interest in the image of Beckett’s *Molloy*, through certain parallel preoccupations within her own practice; the rigid organisation of a passion, the hard-headed legislative intention that sticks to procedure, an inclination to acknowledge a situation and make do. She draws on Molloy’s engagement with a contingently determined number of objects of the same kind, striving toward the ideal of an automatic circular movement, an assembly line, albeit a non-productive one.

Referencing this potential *“utopian artist’s studio, a transportable and autonomous studio contained in Molloy’s own body and clothes”* Ruocco’s own practice over the past few years has focused on the artist’s studio, or rather the absence of a studio, as a constraint in the making of her work. Exhibited for the first time *Vertical Studio* (ongoing since 2010), consists of double-sided paintings coated in layers of transparent acrylic paint, first one side, and then the other; a daily routine of layering wet paint, drying, layering, in a cyclical sequence using four colours (a process intended to be endlessly repeated). The moment the paint starts to dry random droplets of water are applied to the surface, resulting in a motif of circular shapes cutting through the colour, allowing the preceding layers of paint and shape to show through. The double-sidedness of the paintings, initiated by a concern for economy, has since revealed an inclination to interrogate their status as aspiring commodities. Displayed or erected as if building blocks, they can be used to construct an aleatory composition, suggestive of a screen and a shelter.

**Evangelia Spiliopoulou** has developed a practice that both frees and restricts her in the act of making, through self-imposed limitations or parameters. Her recent drawing practice explores process and ways in which she can create a personal ‘detachment’ from the production of the image. In producing drawings in intuitive, abstracted, pattern form, her aim is to be freed from a ‘classical’ style and the traditional methods of a figurative or academic drawing practice with rules regarding the interaction of shapes, light and shadow, perspective, and sense of balance.

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This is evident in her exhibited new work *Drawing #4 (on physical work)*. Using a mark-making system comprised of almost twenty thousand coloured dots applied by hand, she knowingly records the act of labour within the procedure of making. The drawing is made once and then painstakingly copied, or 'reproduced'. Both pieces are shown side by side as one work, eliminating categorisation of original and/or duplicate.

Whilst superficially appearing as abstract drawings, Spiliopoulou's works display information about time, space and human presence. The graphic quality and repetitive process that are visible in their execution bring to mind tally sheets or time cards for 'clocking in', the record of shift work, and therefore create an image of repeated actions and organised time.

In Ruocco and Spiliopoulou's shared interest in how to define an artist's 'labour' and why they do it (the connection between desire and struggle), and what happens when artworks come about, they question the relationships of cause-effect that are usually taken for granted between these two phenomena: artists doing things and artworks emerging.

Both artists' new works feature the motif of the circle (as a dot, or splattered droplet), and through use of this motif their practices are reminiscent of the paradox expressed through the ancient symbol of the Ouroboros, the snake that eats its own tail, representing immortality, infinity or wholeness in creating a circulatory process. This in turn brings us back to Beckett's *Molloy*, his endless repetition, the circling of stones about his person, the futility of it, and yet the sheer enjoyment derived from the task.

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### NOTES TO EDITORS

**Evangelia Spiliopoulou** (b. Greece, 1981) studied drawing and fine art in Athens and in 2009 completed MA Fine Art at Manchester School of Art. She is currently based in Manchester.

Solo exhibitions include: *Of Time And* at Bury Art Museum (2013), and *Place Understanding*, at Bureau, Manchester (2010). Recent group exhibitions include: *Celeste Art Prize*, Ex-Bibli Contemporary Art Centre, Rome; *Afresh*, State Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens; *Android*, Piccadilly Place, Manchester (2013); *Cabedal*, Plataforma Revolver, Lisbon; *The Manchester Contemporary* art fair with Bureau, Manchester; *Working Title*, with Pavel Büchler, PeepHole, Milan (2012); *Industry & Idleness*, Contemporary Art Society, London (2010); and Van Abbemuseum Library, Eindhoven (2009). Spiliopoulou is represented by Bureau. // [www.evangeliaspiliopoulou.com](http://www.evangeliaspiliopoulou.com)

**Assunta Ruocco** (b. Italy, 1979) is currently undertaking her PhD at Loughborough University, School of the Arts, and is based in Loughborough and London. She previously studied MA Contemporary Art Theory at Goldsmiths, London (2008-10); MA Contemporary Visual Art, University College Falmouth (2006-07); and BA Fine Art at Ecole de Recherche Graphique (ERG), Institut Supérieur d'Art Plastiques, Brussels (2001-05).

Exhibitions include: *Summer Fete*, Ceri Hand Gallery (2013); *Pictures and Frames*, solo exhibition, galerie sans titre, Brussels (2010); *Trident Way 2*, group exhibition, Departure Gallery, London; *Un Coeur Simple*, group exhibition curated by Michel Assenmaker, galerie sans titre, Brussels (2009); *AnaDoma-FilmVideoFest*, Braunshweig, Germany (2008); *Paris province, Bruxelles capitale* group exhibition, Centre Wallonie - Bruxelles, Paris; *Par la bande*, group exhibition, Galerie Usage Externe, Brussels (2004). Presentations include: *Low Density Objects*, workshop at Treignac Project, France; *Productivity, relationships with objects and activities without a purpose*, at Triangle Network, a collaboration between HUFA, Hungarian University of Fine Arts, KUVA (Finnish Academy of Fine Arts) and Loughborough School of the Arts (2013); and *Monad and Multitude*, presented at *Beyond Spinoza* conference, Goldsmiths University, London (2011).

PRESS RELEASE INFORMATION – For Immediate Release:

**3 Hardman Square** is owned by Credit Suisse Asset Management (EuroReal Fund), advised by **Müller International**. Designed by Foster and Partners, with a newly refurbished foyer designed by **AEW Architects**, it is one of Manchester's prime city centre properties located at the heart of the acclaimed Spinningfields business district. Bureau is pleased to be working with **CBRE** and **Müller International** at **3 Hardman Square** in an innovative arts and business partnership to support Art in Manchester. // [www.credit-suisse.com](http://www.credit-suisse.com) // [www.muller-london.com](http://www.muller-london.com) // [www.cbre.co.uk](http://www.cbre.co.uk)

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The exhibition launch event is kindly supported by Hunters Gin. // [www.huntersgin.com](http://www.huntersgin.com)



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**LISTINGS INFORMATION**

**Exhibition (Contemporary Art):** *On Physical Work*

**Artists:** Evangelia Spiliopoulou, Assunta Ruocco

**Launch Event / Preview:** 6 – 8pm, Friday 25 October 2013

**Exhibition Dates:** 25 October – 29 November 2013

**Opening Times:** Monday to Friday, 8am – 6pm. And By Appointment.

**Admission:** Free. Fully Accessible.

**Venue:** Bureau, Ground Floor, 3 Hardman Square, Spinningfields, Manchester. M3 3EB

**Email:** [info@bureaugallery.com](mailto:info@bureaugallery.com)

**Website:** [www.bureaugallery.com](http://www.bureaugallery.com)

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