

*The Margins of the Factory* presents two recent projects by the Rotterdam-based duo Iratxe Jaio & Klaas van Gorkum that are motivated by their interest in art's relationship with labour. Each explores sculptural form and manufacturing processes from the perspective of artists who have not usually made objects.

Jaio & van Gorkum undertake what are in part sociological investigations by documenting the local, marginal effects of the displacement of manufacturing industries over the last two generations with the emergence of the global market. Emerging from the artists' personal history and implicating the direct effects of their own vocation as well as work they ask of others, the projects are moreover complicit in asking what kind of industriousness brings value and what political life objects might have.

— Latitudes



Jos van Gorkum in his shed c. 1976. Photo: Willem van Gorkum.

adnplatform

**IRATXE JAIIO &  
KLAAS VAN GORKUM**

*The Margins of the Factory*  
25 January–30 April 2014



Producing time in between other things  
2011

Three videos (12' 30", 5' 22", 36' 11"), 32 colour photographs (76×115 cm & 50×75 cm), 49 wooden legs, and MDF platforms with objects made by Jos van Gorkum between 1976 and 1996. Produced as part of *Amikejo*, curated by Latitudes at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León (MUSAC) in 2011, with support from the Mondriaan Foundation (now Mondriaan Fonds).

Central to *Producing time in between other things* is a selection of wooden objects made by retired factory worker Jos van Gorkum – Gorkum’s grandfather – which the artists documented in the homes of his relations, friends and former neighbours across the Netherlands. During this process, the artists located the original lathe on which these items had been crafted and began to teach themselves woodturning. The forms which they made as they worked at learning a hobby become the means to support the display of the original objects, presented alongside three videos and photography.

Work in Progress  
2013

Video (14' 22"), 739 polyurethane sculptures, and 47 moulds. Produced with support from the Eremuak program of the Basque Government and from Centrum Beeldende Kunst Rotterdam.

*Work in Progress* immerses itself in the manufacturing industry of Markina-Xemein, the rural Basque village where Jaio comes from. A video documents the mass-production of rubber car parts, following the pieces from the assembly line in a worker-owned factory to subcontracted workshops where informal workers finish them by hand. Several of these workers are employed by the artists to cast hundreds of replicas of small modernist sculptures. These are displayed on mass-produced shelving to evoke the "Chalk Laboratory" of Basque sculptor Jorge Oteiza, a fierce critic of the commodification of art.

\* The Lips Propeller factory where Jos van Gorkum worked was founded in 1939, in Drunen, the Netherlands. In 1998 it was acquired by TI Group, continuing as John Crane Lips for four years, before being taken over by the Finnish corporation Wärtsilä. In 2010 Wärtsilä shut down the factory and moved production to China.

† The woodturning lathe that Jos van Gorkum used, was welded together in the weeks prior to his retirement in 1976 by his colleagues at the Lips factory. It was assembled from bits of scrap metal, during the friday evening “hobby hours”, when employees were allowed to use some of the factory’s equipment for their personal projects.

‡ The objects made by Jos van Gorkum were mostly conceived for a domestic setting. Many did not survive the passing of time or the evolving tastes of their owners. Some were nevertheless kept around, perhaps serving as reminders of their humbler origin.

§ Jos van Gorkum kept a metal cigar box, in which he collected magazine clippings, sketches and blueprints of different objects made by turning wood, as well as a number of price lists from mail order catalogs, in order to keep track of the value of the

\* The rural area of Lea-Artibai in the Basque Country conceals an elaborate informal economy based on the trimming of excess rubber from pieces that come out of industrial moulds. This manual labour is carried out by an unregulated workforce that consists mainly of women and undocumented immigrants. As in pre-industrial times, they gather in spaces such as kitchens, storerooms or porches, but instead of spinning wool or mending fishing nets, these workers handle abstract industrial forms which have no direct use value for them.

† A synthetic rubber factory was opened in the Lea-Artibai region of the Basque Country in 1971. The facility currently has clients such as Volvo, Volkswagen and Audi. It is part of the Mondragon Corporation, one of the world’s largest worker cooperatives and an important example of worker self-management. In response to market pressures, in the 1980s the worker–owners collectively decided to open factories in countries such as Romania, Mexico, and India, and to subcontract work to personnel outside the cooperative system.

‡ The sculptor Jorge Oteiza (1908–2003) is renowned for being one of the principal theorists of Basque modern art. In 1960 he published a text called “The End of Contemporary Art”, in which

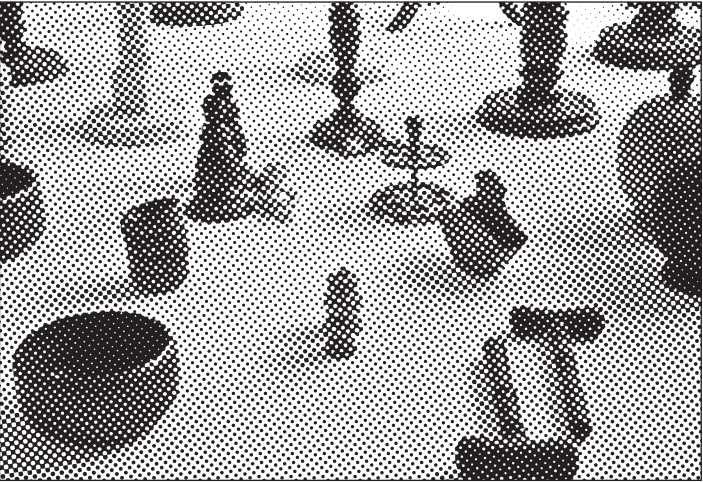


Photo: Iratxe Jaio & Klaas van Gorkum

things he made. He left this box to his son (Klaas’ father), before passing away in 1996, with the idea that it might come in handy one day.



Photo: Iratxe Jaio & Klaas van Gorkum

he announced he was abandoning sculpture. Between 1972 and 1974 he nevertheless resumed work on the “Chalk Laboratory”, a series of small abstract sculptures made by combining standard pieces of chalk. He considered these “Tizas” to be linguistic experiments, forming part of a potentially infinite repertoire of variations, yet had no ambition to see them reproduced outside of the studio. Due to the vulnerability of the materials used in these sculptures, they are now kept under climate-controlled conditions in storage at the Oteiza Museum in Navarra, and cannot be loaned for exhibitions.

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Opening: Saturday 25 January 2014, 2pm

Curated by Latitudes  
(Max Andrews & Mariana Cánepa Luna)  
www.LTTDS.org

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Opening  
Saturday 25 January 2014, 2pm  
Performance by Nathaniel Robin Mann

The exhibition opening features a performance by British "avant-folk" musician Nathaniel Robin Mann, developed in collaboration with Jaio & van Gorkum around the raw footage of *Work in Progress* and the tradition of work song. Mann interprets the Basque popular song "Oi Peio Peio" – a dialogue between a woman worker and her cruel boss, who insists that she carries on working throughout the night. First collected in *Cancionero Popular Vasco* in 1918, the song was popularized by singer–songwriter Mikel Laboa, founder of "Ez Dok Amairu" ("No Thirteen"), the cultural movement of Basque poets, musicians and artists whose name was a suggestion of sculptor Jorge Oteiza.