

# DISTORTED

## Alternative Guide to the Universe - Hayward Gallery



Calling on makers whose practice straddles institutionalism and the art historical canon, *Alternative Guide to the Universe* is an inquisitive group exhibition that surveys the many nuances that bind the human experience.

Showcasing multimedia works by fringe artists, scientists, architects, inventors and engineers, the Hayward Gallery has amalgamated a bold constellation of representations, wherein the paranormal is foregrounded, demystified and celebrated through a language all its own.



What propels these outsider works into critical discussion is the tenacity of their makers in translating the enigmatic into something uniquely tangible and life affirming, in spite of all odds. Having overcome numerous personal obstacles—such as mental and physical illness, institutional rejection, homelessness, illiteracy, World Wars, mental breakdowns and delayed self-discovery—this group is fearless in offering not only visions but also utopian blueprints for what the world we inhabit could look like.

Add to this the fact that these substantial works have been created by those with little to no formal training or background in the arts, and it becomes clear that the magic at work here is rooted in a freedom of expression afforded by living, working and dreaming in tangent to the

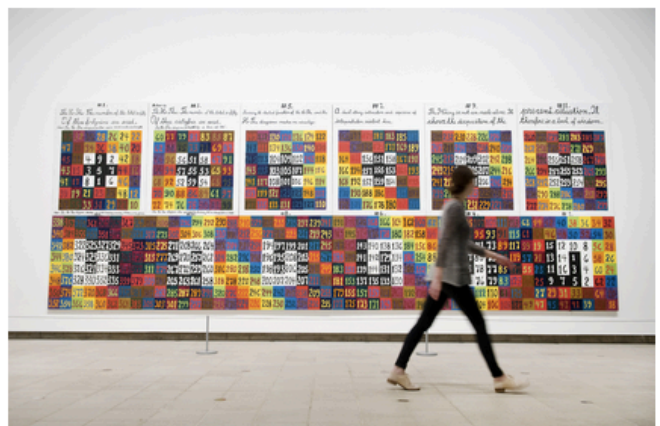


From Alfred Jensen's immense apocalyptic number paintings in the first hall to Lee Godie's charmingly intimate self-portraits of alter egos in the last, the exhibition drives itself forward through an unspoken energy that visibly resonates within each visitor to the space.

Perhaps it is partly the playful nature of the works themselves, rendered most compellingly in Bodys Isek Kingelez's brightly colored architectural models for future buildings made from Lipton tea bags, cans of Beck's and other salvaged recyclables.

Or maybe it is the sense of complete submersion and submission that occurs when enveloped by Marcel Storr's soaring, post-nuclear Parisian cathedrals, whose inherent luminosity and verticality propel the viewer into a meditation that leaves worldly concerns exactly where Storr has left them, as tiny dots at the bottom of the bigger picture.

Whatever it is, each work in this exhibition resonates an authenticity, vitality and spirituality that can only come from a maker living his work. The sense of curiosity and possibility that these works evoke becomes a contagion that lingers in visitors long after departing this alternative universe and stepping back onto solid ground.



Rammellzee, *Color Letter Racer Set* (c.1988) and *White Letter Racer Set* (c.1991), Installation view 'Alternative Guide to the Universe', Hayward Gallery 2013, © Estate of Carmela Zagari Rammellzee, Photo: Linda Nyland  
Marcel Storr, *Untitled* (1975), Installation view 'Alternative Guide to the Universe', Hayward Gallery 2013, © Liliane and Bertrand Kempf, Photo: Linda Nyland  
Lee Godie, *Lee and Cameo on a chair...* (early to mid 1970s), © the artist, Courtesy Richard and Ellen Sandor Family Collection  
Alfred Jensen, *Twelve Events In a Dual Universe* (1978), Installation view 'Alternative Guide to the Universe', Hayward Gallery 2013, © ARS, NY and DACS, London 2013, Photo: Linda Nyland  
Installation view of works by GUO FENGYI at 'Alternative Guide to the Universe' exhibition, Hayward Gallery 2013, © the artist, Photo: Linda Nyland