

In 2015, the Stedelijk Museum purchased an important group of works by the New York artist collective Bernadette Corporation. The enigmatic collective has challenged and subverted the world of fashion, film, and art since its inception in a nightclub in 1993. The acquired works range from videos and photos to fashion designs and a floor sculpture of empty DVD cases. The exhibition *Multiplyplex* highlights BC's experimental, multidisciplinary output, one that is based on mythmaking and seduction.

By adopting the form and tactics of a corporate persona, BC is able to operate in changing formations and under different guises. The "corporation" acts as a kind of front, providing "the perfect alibi for not having to fix an identity," as BC declared in a 1997 manifesto. The collective started out in the nineties as a DIY fashion label before moving into publishing with a fashion magazine, as well as collectively authoring a novel and becoming underground filmmakers. BC challenges the monolithic professionalism of these industries with humor. Their early fashion collections comment on the commodification of the Lower East Side's subcultures by fashion label brands. BC parodied the high fashion of the time, staging madcap fashion shows that presented both their own designs and garments made by others, branding everything with the BC label. For editorials featured in magazines like *Purple* and *i-D*, BC found their models via the phone book, posing them as burglars and car thieves. In *Made in USA*, the magazine BC produced from 1999 to 2001, superficial fashion spreads were juxtaposed with the writings of French cultural theorists. Moreover, their most ambitious film project, *Pedestrian Cinema* (2005–2006), intentionally consists solely of announcements, posters, and a handful of short videos.

The show at the Stedelijk takes as its starting point the idea of the seductive surface. Designed as an installation, the exhibit displays recently acquired works alongside other pieces shown only in the form of reproductions and copies. *Multiplyplex* focuses on BC projects produced from the mid-1990s until the mid-2000s.

Beatrix Ruf, director of the Stedelijk Museum, remarks how "Bernadette Corporation has cultivated a mystique around its own collective. Its work undermines and rejects the idea of 'marketable identity': the visionary fashion designer, the identifiable logo, the artist as solitary genius. Maintaining this elusive yet critical stance is what makes Bernadette Corporation one of the most influential and iconic artist collectives today."

The exhibition is curated by Anne Ruygt.

About Bernadette Corporation

BC has held solo shows at international venues that include Witte de With, Rotterdam; Kunsthalle Zürich; Artist Space, New York; and the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London.

BC is currently composed of two members, Bernadette Van-Huy and John Kelsey. Both artists live and work in New York.

*(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)*