

I AM AT WAR WITH MY TIME

Julian Rosefeldt

In preparation of my previous project, *Deep Gold* (2013–14), I engaged with feminist positions in art history, which involved reading feminist manifestos. That in turn led to an intensive research of artists' manifestos.

With the exception of the one quoted sentence fragment, "All that is solid melts into air," from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels's *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 (together with the Ten Commandments and Martin Luther's *Ninety Five Theses* of 1517, which may be considered by some the mother of all manifestos), my selection starts at the beginning of the 20th century with the legendary 1909 *Futurist Manifesto* by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and ends at the beginning of this millennium; the latest manifesto used is by the film director Jim Jarmusch.

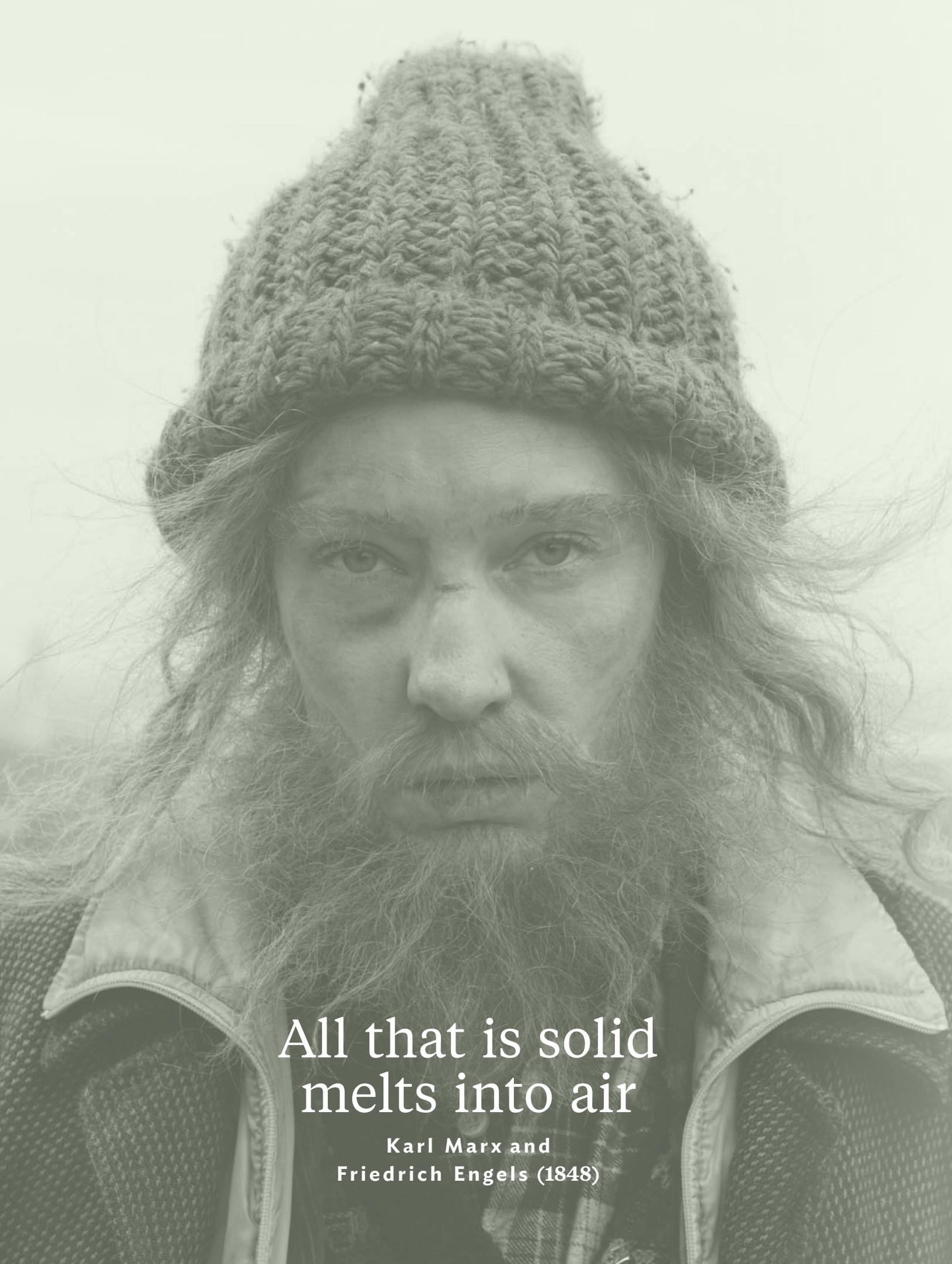
By using excerpts and combining original texts from various manifestos, I made a total of 12 manifesto collages. *Manifesto* is thus, taken as a whole, also a kind of composite manifesto—a manifesto of manifestos.

In view of the fact that most manifestos have been written by men and are, thus, practically bursting with testosterone—up to the last third of the 20th century, there were only a few manifestos by women artists—I thought it would be interesting to have them all spoken by a woman today. The basic idea was not to illustrate the various manifesto texts, but rather to have the Australian actress Cate Blanchett embody the manifesto.

Cate is simply the best! Not only is she incredibly charismatic, intelligent, versatile and of course very beautiful, but also amazingly good in doing what she does: technically, physically, linguistically, she is unbelievably precise, to the point and quite quick. When Cate interviews herself as a newscaster à la CNN and reads, among other things, texts by Sol LeWitt on conceptual art, the scene itself becomes a work of conceptual art.

We are well advised to read artists' manifestos also as seismographs of their time. Manifestos in the original sense are usually not written because somebody asked for them; people write them out of an absolute inner need to tell the world something and to demand something from it. They go all out. A manifesto is always absolute, exuberant; it contains everything, including the notion of art and the entire world.





All that is solid
melts into air

Karl Marx and
Friedrich Engels (1848)

TO PUT OUT A MANIFESTO YOU MUST WANT: A B C T O F U L M I N A T E

TO FLY INTO A RAGE AND
SHARPEN YOUR WINGS
TO CONQUER AND DISSEMINATE LITTLE ABCS AND BIG ABCS;

TO SIGN,
SHOUT,
SWEAR,

TO PROVE YOUR
NE PLUS ULTRA,

TO ORGANIZE PROSE INTO A FORM OF
ABSOLUTE AND IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCE.

I AM AGAINST;
ACTION;

I AM FOR CONTINUOUS CONTRADICTION,
FOR AFFIRMATION TOO.

I AM NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST
AND I DO NOT EXPLAIN BECAUSE

AND I DO NOT EXPLAIN BECAUSE
I H A T E C O M M O N S E N S E .

I AM WRITING
A MANIFESTO
BECAUSE

I H A V E
NOTHING
TO SAY.

TRISTAN TZARA
(1918)



Mankind is passing through the most profound crisis in its history. An old world is dying; a new one is being born. Capitalist civilization, which has dominated the economic, political and cultural life of continents, is in the process of decay. It is now breeding new and devastating wars. At this very moment the Far East seethes with military conflicts and preparations which will have far-reaching consequences for the whole of humanity.

We call upon all honest intellectuals, all writers and artists, to abandon decisively the treacherous illusion that art can exist for art's sake, or that the artist can remain remote from the historic conflicts in which all men must take sides. We call upon them to break with bourgeois ideas which seek to conceal the violence and fraud, the corruption and decay of capitalist society. We urge them to forge a new art that shall be a weapon in the battle for a new and superior world.

—
The John Reed Club
of New York **1932**



Dashing down into the street, pistol in hand, and firing blindly, as fast as you can pull the trigger, into the crowd. Kill, fly faster, love to your heart's content. Let yourself be carried along. And if you should die, are you not certain of reawakening among the dead? Farewell to absurd choices, the dreams of dark abyss, to rivalries, the prolonged patience. Farewell to the flight of the seasons, the artificial order of ideas, to the ramp of danger, to time for everything! May you only take the trouble to *practice* poetry.

—
André Breton **1924**

How day will eventually break—who knows? But we can feel the morning. We are no longer moonstruck wanderers roaming dreamily in the pale light of history. A cool early morning wind is blowing around us; he who doesn't want to shiver must stride out. And we and all those striding with us see in the distance the early light of the awakening morning! Glassy and bright a new world shines out in the early light, it is sending out its first rays. A first gleam of jubilant dawn. Decades, generations—and the great sun of art will begin its victorious course. Today more than ever we believe in our will, which creates for us the only life value. And this value is: everlasting change.

—
Bruno Taut **1921**



To the electric chair with Chopin! The blue discharge of car exhausts, scented with a dynamic modernity, has exactly the same emotional value as the beloved talents of our "exquisite" modernists.

In my glorious isolation, I am illuminated by the marvellous incandescence of my electrically charged nerves.

—
Manuel Maples Arce **1921**



We rebel against everything which is filthy and worm-ridden and corroded by time. We must breathe in the tangible miracles of contemporary life—the iron network of speedy communications which envelops the Earth; the Earth which itself is hurtling at breakneck speed along the racetrack of its orbit.

—
 Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà,
 Luigi Russolo, Giacomo Balla,
 Gino Severini **1909**



Nothing is original. Steal from anywhere that resonates with inspiration or fuels your imagination. Devour old films, new films, music, books, paintings, photographs, poems, dreams, random conversations, architecture, bridges, street signs, trees, clouds, bodies of water, light and shadows. Select only things to steal from that speak directly to your soul. If you do this, your work, and theft, will be authentic. Authenticity is invaluable; originality is nonexistent. And don't bother concealing your thievery—celebrate it if you feel like it. In any case, always remember what Jean-Luc Godard said: "It's not where you take things from—it's where you take them to."

—
 Jim Jarmusch **2004**

We greet the ordered fantasy of movement.
 Our eyes spinning, like propellers, take off into the future on the wings of hypothesis.
 We believe that the time is at hand when we shall be able to hurl into space the hurricanes of movement, reined in by our tactical lassoes.

—
 Dziga Vertov **1922**



No to spectacle.
 No to virtuosity.
 No to transformations and magic and make-believe.
 No to the glamour and transcendence of the star image.
 No to the heroic.
 No to the anti-heroic.
 No to trash imagery.
 No to involvement of performer or spectator.
 No to style.
 No to camp.
 No to seduction of spectator by the wiles of the performer.
 No to eccentricity.
 No to moving or being moved.

—
 Yvonne Rainer **1965**



All current art is fake, not because it is copy, appropriation, simulacra or imitation but because it lacks the crucial push of power, guts and passion.
 All of man is fake. All of man is false. Not only because he cheats and lies with charming ease and hates and kills with determined speed, but also because man's new cyber form is Man as God.

—
 Elaine Sturtevant **1999/2004**



There is one Truth, ourselves, and everything is permitted.
 We are proud, handsome and predatory.
 We hunt machines, they are our favourite game.
 We invent them and then hunt them down.

—
 Wyndham Lewis **1914**



I say to all: Abandon love, abandon aestheticism,
 abandon the baggage of wisdom, for in the new
 culture, your wisdom is ridiculous and insignificant.
 Only dull and impotent artists veil their work
 with sincerity. Art requires truth, not sincerity.

—
 Kazimir Malevich **1915**



I am for all art that takes its form from the lines of life itself, that twists
 and extends and accumulates and spits and drips, and is heavy and
 coarse and blunt and sweet and stupid as life itself.

—
 Claes Oldenburg **1961**



Here we cast anchor in rich ground. Ghosts drunk on energy, we dig the
 trident into unsuspecting flesh. We are a downpour of maledictions as
 tropically abundant as vertiginous vegetation, rubber and rain are our
 sweat, we bleed and burn with thirst, our blood is vigor.
 I am against systems, the most acceptable system is on principle to
 have none.

Logic is a complication. Logic is always wrong. Married to logic, art
 would live in incest, swallowing its own tail, still part of its own body,
 fornicating within itself.

—
 Tristan Tzara **1918**

**For Manifesto, Julian Rosefeldt has created 12 collages that each comprise excerpts, combined and re-edited texts of various artist manifestos throughout the 20th century.*

Besides the work within the collection, Burger Collection is engaged in co-operations with artists both within and beyond the collection. *Manifesto* (2014–2015) by Julian Rosefeldt has been, among others, co-produced by Burger Collection.

World premiere: Australian Center for the Moving Image, December 2015
 Other venues: Hamburger Bahnhof, Sprengel Museum and Ruhrtriennale

JULIAN ROSEFELDT

Manifesto

2014–2015

12-channel film installation with color and

sound: 10 min 30 sec.

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