



English Exhibition guide

Hanne Lippard Ulyd

Ground floor

Miriam Laura Leonardi Help in the Search!

1st floor

Films d'animation (1971-75) d'Ali Akbar Sadeghi Screening Room

25.05 - 15.07.2018

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Ground floor

Hanne Lippard

Ulyd

*Sophokles' frequently cited dictum "Silence is the kosmos of women" has its medical analog in women's amulets from antiquity which picture a uterus equipped with a lock at the mouth. When it is not locked the mouth may gape open and let out unspeakable things"*¹

Born in England in 1984, Hanne Lippard grew up in Norway before settling in Berlin. Lippard has been using language as the raw material for her work for the last eight years, processing it in the form of writings, vocal performances, sound installations and printed objects and sculpture. Her work takes its place in a rich history of the performative use of the voice and the linguistic de-construction of language, whose genealogy is found both in the fields of music, spoken word and theatre and in sound poetry and art. In her previous projects, Lippard has worked on a variety of subject matter, such as the structure of language itself, relationships between body and language, possible fates of the body after death and the relationship between conceptual art and orality.

For *Ulyd*, Hanne Lippard has developed a series of new works that explore the social forces governing female verbal expression, an expression that has been adroitly shaped since the time of the ancient Greeks as an instrument used for confining the place of women within a restricted social perimeter. The feminine was considered uncontrollable, and its language was fashioned in such a way as to ensure that women were continually attentive to the tone of their own voices and ways of expressing themselves. Until recently, the use of obscene and direct language was generally forbidden to them. Should they resort to it, the concomitant proof of their impurity and uncontrollable nature, supposedly inherent in their use of such language, would be held up against them in return. Between these two poles - a form of imposed expression and obscenity - female speech has long been limited to a narrow field. While gender relations have gradually become more balanced over time, former cultural codes still structure the use of language. Even where an obscene and irreverent form of expression is used as a tool to liberate female speech, such expression remains a mere reaction to these norms. Our collective unconscious has still not been fully decolonised, and many women confess to practicing self-censorship in all manner of situation where power struggles are at issue.

At Fri Art, the exhibition *Ulyd*, a Norwegian word that is difficult to translate but that defines an unpleasant and uncontrolled noise, serves as a sounding board for these questions, while the main room crystallises

attendant tensions. A muted space, soft and silent, bordered by Austrian curtains, the floor of which, covered in a light carpet, plays host to two variations on the theme of linguistic obscenity, which serves the artist as raw material. Uncontrollable reflexes from psychological depths, terms of abuse and profanity indicative of the personality of the man or woman using them. The sound piece *Blunt* (2018) resonates like an emancipatory soliloquy whose insults are self-censored. The words distort and contract, seem to escape the control of the speaker. They lose their meaning and become a linguistic abstraction of rhythmic logorrhea.

On the wall, new pieces (*Curse I-XIII*, 2018) reinterpret Roman curse tablets. These curse tablets were usually created by voiceless, provincial, non-citizens, women or slaves, those whose speech did not count and who saw themselves relegated to the symbolic confines of the empire. While these tablets promised vengeance, they provided, above all, a release for psychological strain, like the platforms of expression offered by social media today. The artist has composed thirteen tablets as variations on the theme of resentment and malevolence. These revenge letters, that the artist sees as much as parodies as visual poems, provide a humorous commentary on the various proposals and themes of the exhibitions. Some describe absurd, banal situations that highlight the superficiality of our daily lives.

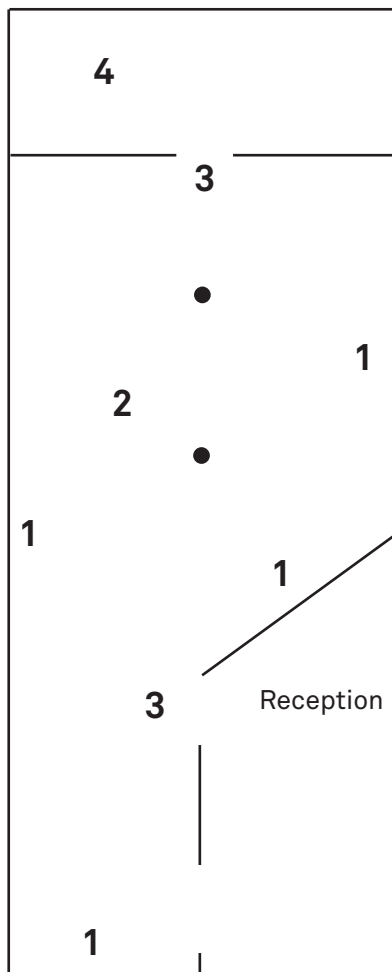
On the other side of a curtain, the second room is plunged in darkness and hosts the installation *No Answer is Also an Answer* (2017), previously shown at the David Dale Gallery in Glasgow. The space is enlivened by a subtle play of lights within which the recording of a text is played; it is composed of fragments of formulas of politeness and ready-made phrases as found in the most mundane email exchanges. This poetic piece explores the absurdity of this bland, neutral defer-ence and gives the exhibition's take on social criticism a particularly scathing aspect.

¹ Anne CARSON, *The Gender of Sound*, in *Glass, Irony and God*, New Directions Publishing, 1995, pp 120-121

Ground floor

Hanne Lippard

Ulyd



1. *Curse I-XIII*, 2018
Laser-engraving on plexiglass
116 mm x 177 mm

2. *Blunt*, 2018
Single-channel audio file
07'58"

3. *Cunt*, 2018
Draped silk-curtains
Dimensions variable

4. *No Answer is Also an Answer*, 2017
3-channel audio file, automatic light
system, motion detector
14'57"

1st floor

Miriam Laura Leonardi

Help in the Search!

At first glance, Miriam Laura Leonardi's lightweight objects do not require any more engagement and attention than an Instagram feed. Designed to be entirely self-referential, these exhibition Lorem Ipsums are pretexts for the creation of mirroring effects, spatial relationships and temporal bridges that condition and punctuate the attendee's visit.

The first room houses a diptych (*yeah*, 2018) that draws the visitor to the centre of the space. Suspended horizontally, an ambigram in neon tubing whose graphical representation enables the reading of the word in both directions, while the inverted bronze of a two-bodied beetle lies on the ground attached by the head. Each of the two sign-objects expresses a self-contradictory meaning in terms of aesthetic representation. At a second level, this impact is also played out between them. The two signs arranged as a cross both complement and counter each other. Separately and together, they engulf themselves and each other: the evanescence of the suspended interjection "yeah" and the weight of the beetle on its back on the ground, materialising the play of meaning, both in reference to themselves and each other.

In the second space, a film (*Aliens &*, 2018) produced and shot on a hill above the Catacombs of St. Callixtus in Rome is projected onto a wooden structure. This static shot reveals a frame constructed as a generic image (a green hill against a backdrop of blue sky) in a reference to the *Bliss Image*, the ubiquitous Microsoft Windows XP wallpaper. In this setting and without prior rehearsal, the artist has directed an action that mimics an advertising aesthetic. The actors gradually stand up and leave the picnic blanket, walk to the camera and speak directly to the viewer, as they would in broadcasting media. Their words, smothered by the fries they are eating, prevent us from properly understanding what they are saying. This absurd metaphor of the inefficiency of communication continues in the background, on the top of a hill where the construction of a wooden hut will never be fully completed.

The hut frame is materialised in the exhibition space and serves as support for the projection screen. This wooden construction (*Help in the Search!*, 2018) is the same width as the hut in the film, while its sides are three times narrower, turning it into an urban advertising panel. The print advertisement used by the artist to cast for extras for the film in a Roman bar hangs from one of the joists. These meta devices weave links between the production process and the

existence of the exhibition. They bring together the different space-times that allow the artist to create her exhibition, her production, the fictional space of the film and that of the exhibition as offered up to the visitor.

The exhibition is designed so that the visitor's path through the two rooms takes on a symmetry. The visitor thus becomes subjected to a loop motif: the perspective provided of the neon and the bronze is identical each time the visitor passes through, whether entering the space or leaving it. The conditions that make it possible to understand the two works are inverted in the two rooms: the visitor must remain motionless in order to view moving images, whereas she/he must be in movement for the ambigram, which is static, to be revealed. Like the double beetle lying on its back, the spectator is trapped in a system of superficial vanities, where vacuity and that which is unfinished remain lazily on repeat.

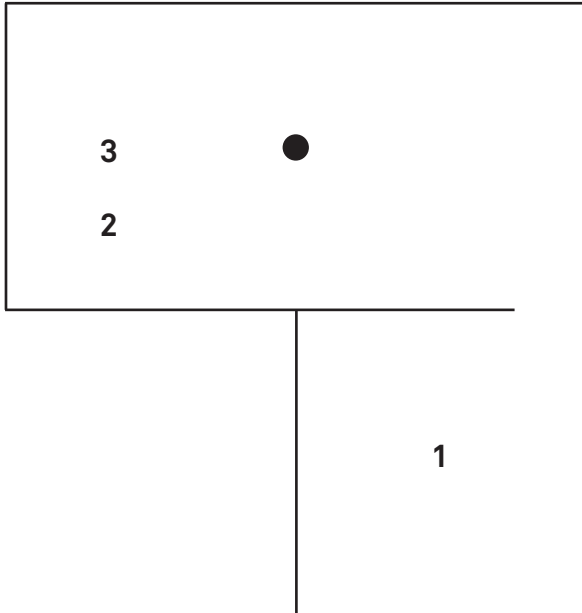
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1st floor

Miriam Laura Leonardi

Help in the Search!



1. *yeah*, 2018
Neon, bronze
35 x 14 x 2 cm / 50 x 20 x 6 cm

2. *Aliens &*, 2018
HD Film, 15 min, looped

3. *Help in the Search!*, 2018
Wood, A4 paper
275 x 280 x 70 cm

Screening Room Basement

Program of animation films (1971-75) by Ali Akbar Sadeghi

For the first time in Switzerland, Fri Art Kunsthalle is presenting a selection of children's animated films (1971-1975) by the Iranian artist Ali Akbar Sadeghi who was born in Teheran in 1937.

This all-round artist began his career in the 1950s and went through many distinct periods, touching on a wide range of genres and mediums (stained glass, book illustration, furniture, erotic works, sculpture, drawing and oil painting).

His work is rooted in the confluence of surrealism and the rich history of Persian miniatures. The purpose of these was to illustrate the works of Persian poetry, which is expressed through epic poetry, moral tales, lyricism, mysticism and panegyric eulogy and whose golden age was between the 10th and the 15th century.

In his animated films, Sadeghi takes these classical themes and re-appropriates them. The war epic is converted into a peaceful tale in which cannonballs explode into millions of flowers or birds instead of reaching their target. The concept of the bloody duel is also challenged by two warriors who, when the final fight arrives, choose to escape together on a makeshift boat. In another film, in a dreamlike mise en abyme, the last pieces on a chessboard prefer to sit together around the board and start a new game instead of fighting to the end.

The symmetry present in most of his sequences pays homage to the traditional composition of Persian miniatures, while their narrative freedom testify to the penetrating power of the psychedelic movement of the 1960s as well as the legacy of surrealism.

When released in the 1970s, Sadeghi's films received awards and honours at the major international children's film festivals: the Paris International Youth Short Film Festival; the Los Angeles International Festival of Children's Films; the Chicago 11th International Film Festival; the Virgin Islands International Film Festival; the Tehran 9th International Film Festival for Children and Young Adults; the Krakow 12th International Film Festival.

Seven Cities

1971, 15'31''

35mm, couleur, sonore

Transfert numérique

Script : Firouz Shirvanlou

Musique : Sheida Gharachedaghi

Ali Akbar Sadeghi Studio & Kanoon

Flower Storm

1972, 8'20''

35mm, couleur, sonore

Transfert numérique

Script : Hossein Samakar

Musique : Esfandiar Monfaredzadeh

Ali Akbar Sadeghi Studio & Kanoon

Boasting

1973, 9'35''

35mm, couleur, sonore

Transfert numérique

Script : Ebrahim Forouzesh & Ali Akbar Sadeghi

Musique : Sheida Gharachedaghi

Ali Akbar Sadeghi Studio & Kanoon

The Rook

1974, 10'49''

35mm, couleur, sonore

Transfert numérique

Script : Ebrahim Forouzesh

Musique : Esfandiar Monfaredzadeh

Ali Akbar Sadeghi Studio & Kanoon

The Sun King

1975, 17'04''

35mm, couleur, sonore

Transfert numérique

Musique : Dariush Dolatshahi

Ali Akbar Sadeghi Studio & Kanoon