

Second

Huw Lemmey, Luzie Meyer, Becket MWN,
Angharad Williams, Bruno Zhu
Curated by Gianmaria Andreetta

3 April - 16 May 2021

One wishes to enter a room and experience things for the first time. The group show *Second* is deceptive like that and invites the audience to consider the wider literary projects of each artist as a time and place that happened before. First encounters show us what it is like to live in history, the sense that something momentous is taking place without anyone knowing what is going to come out of it or how it's going to turn out. Second encounters can be more candid, more relaxed. They build upon experience and conversation. They can provide a sense of orientation and point to a place of confidence, although at times they are no less hostile to the values we take for granted.

The group exhibition *Second's* two rooms unfold like an extended literary diagram, describing a series of relationships combining dreams, memory, loss, muteness, storytelling, often via multiple transcriptions and adaptations, and a hazy set of transitions and transformations between these activities. The individual and collective works are driven by these transformations, and ostensibly pull you into contact with them as if their function were to populate the fictional models they rely on with real people. Perhaps the goal is to manifest fiction in the present? A mirroring of the way experience and memory give shape to our emotional lives.

This is all very complex and layered – pieces fitting together and blurring again, referencing each other and transporting you elsewhere, with a sense of depth and movement, and familiar heights but no clear resolution or ending.

Stories lie underneath these diagrammatic relations and become apparent in the relationships between the artists themselves. There is a sense of codependency but also relations of deferral that lead to situations of (soft or hard) humiliation and even sacrifice; voices trapped in pods, an invitation to face the wall, puppets and puppeteers.

The two-tiered architecture and the show's invitation to both revisit previous written material and to make new work highlight the way we find ourselves simultaneously dwelling in memory and loss, trying to rebuild the past, whilst spending time inhabiting imagination and fiction, fabricating a present.

Second

Another entry point of the exhibition is through the lens of collaboration. Bringing together a group of artists most of whom know one another, or have already participated in each other's work, curator Gianmaria Andreetta invited artists and writers Huw Lemmey, Luzie Meyer, Becket MWN, Angharad Williams and Bruno Zhu to work collectively.

1 *things you need before leaving the house (on the gradual construction of thought in text)* (2021) is an audio dialogue and installation based on the essay 'On the Gradual Construction of Thoughts During Speech' by 18th century German playwright and novelist Heinrich von Kleist, and the letters between Kleist and his sister Ulrike von Kleist. The essay's insight is that our thoughts are not pre-formed before we articulate them, but that they and our subjectivities are articulated by the objects, forces, and people who affect us at a given moment. Becket MWN's audio work and installation transform this text by reincarnating Heinrich and Ulrike in contemporary Los Angeles, driving around aimlessly and talking over the phone about the devices, terminals, and relations that receive and relay their language and their senses of self.

2 Becket MWN and Luzie Meyer co-star in Meyer's new video *Tryst, Again* (2021). A personal and dialogical adaptation of *Ghost Trio* (1975), one of the plays Samuel Becket made for television. *Tryst, Again* was taped and edited in situ in Fri Art and at the Swiss Puppet Museum in Fribourg during the week prior to the opening.

3 Angharad Williams' sculpture, *From Flowers to Felons* (2021) came about through conversation around an unpublished yet punctuating piece in Williams' recent oeuvre, *Now Watch This Drive* (2018). Williams performed it twice to an audience at Peak in London during her solo exhibition *Island Mentality* in 2019 and at *Other Words for Anger* an event that took place in Rotherham in February 2019 organised and led by adult survivors of child sexual exploitation. In this story, a character traverses a hieronymus bosch-style bucolic landscape, watches but does not participate in debauchery, and ultimately finds themselves at the limits of a terrain where incarceration is inevitable. One of the sources important to Williams at the time, was Andy Warhol's development of the Flowers series and Jean Genet's writings.

4 With much of his work like his writing, Huw Lemmey is interested in the literal architecture of world building, of how history continues to exist through the buildings humans create and pass on to subsequent generations, and of the fact that we are living in houses built by people no longer alive, yet continue to make use of these spaces and activate them through memory and imagination. Lemmey is interested therefore in how we represent them in illustrations (especially cityscapes) and in increasingly dynamic mapping, and now in computer games, where just to create a visual landscape of a city is a compelling enough task to warrant an entire genre of gaming. Although the block depicted in *Biblioteca* (2021) is not a specific one, it hints at the space as a depository of knowledge and experience. The work is influenced by both mediaeval and early modern representations of cities in Europe - half maps or plans, half paintings - but also by the urban design of Barcelona (where Lemmey lives), in particular the revolutionary 19th century street plan devised by the Catalan engineer and urban planner Ildefons Cerda.

5 After a period of uncontrollable flatulence in 2018, artist Bruno Zhu, together with the curator of the show, formed the cover band The Unplugged, a homage to MTV Unplugged. The Unplugged are not professional musicians and so making music in a learned fashion was out of the question. The band settled for singing songs by other people in a way that was faithful to the stripped-back style of the acoustic genre, ending up at the crossroads of improv and language games. The Unplugged set list for Fribourg, *Live in Fribourg 2021* (2021), includes covers of songs by Kylie Minogue, Sophie Ellis-Bextor and Everything but the Girl.

1 Becket MWN
things you need before leaving the house on the gradual construction of thought in text, 2021
Acrylic resin, speakers, porcelain, and audio loop
Dimensions variable

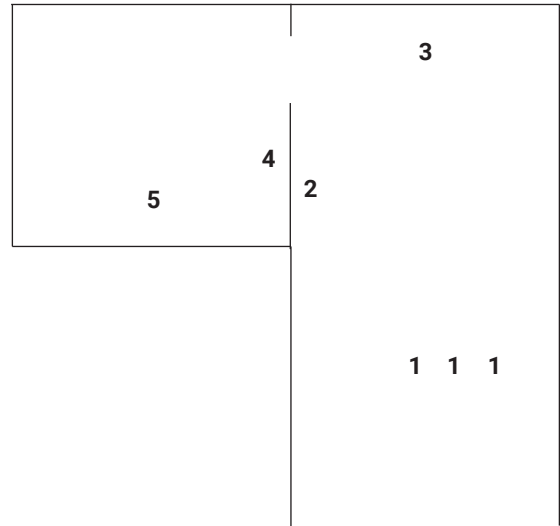
2 Luzie Meyer
Tryst, Again, 2021
HD Video
20'01"

3 Angharad Williams
From Flowers to Felons, 2021
Plywood, plexiglas
160 x 100 x 100cm

4 Huw Lemmey
Biblioteca, 2021
Acrylic and gesso on canvas
30 x 89cm

5 The Unplugged
Live from Fribourg, 2021

12:00 Missing (the cat)
12:45 Slow (but in shock)
13:30 Murder On The Dancefloor (but needy)
14:15 Missing (the point)
15:00 Murder On The Dancefloor (but it's losing signal)
15:45 Murder On The Dancefloor (but groovier)
16:30 Missing (the boundaries)
17:15 Murder On The Dancefloor (but drunk)
(Encore)



Gianmaria Andreetta is a curator and writer born in Lugano, Switzerland and living and working in Berlin. He is the co-founder of the artists cooperative HTSU, and a fellow of the RPDPA, Research Platform and Doctoral Practice in Arts. Andreetta is the 2019 recipient of the Swiss Art Award in the category of Critique, Publishing, Exhibition. Recent commissions explore the nature of cooperatives through relationships with a public and public ownership (Ghislaine Leung, premiering Spring 2021), have developed the concept of "Sitcom Architecture" as a built-environment for broadcast and familial relations (Becket MWN) and have supported ongoing artistic research on prophecy and breath pointing to corresponding physical and spiritual worship within Pentecostal traditions (Ima-Abasi Okon). Coming shows include: Tunnel Tunnel, Lausanne with Noémi Michel; DREI, Cologne with Angharad Williams; Stadtgalerie, Bern with Richard John Jones and Luca Beeler.

Huw Lemmey is a novelist, artist and critic living in Barcelona. He is the author of three novels: *Unknown Language* (Ignota Books 2020), *Red Tory: My Corbyn Chemsex Hell* (Montez Press, 2019), and *Chubz: The Demonization of my Working Arse* (Montez Press, 2016). He writes on culture, sexuality and cities for the Guardian, Frieze, Flash Art, Tribune, TANK, The Architectural Review, Art Monthly, New Humanist, Rhizome, The White Review, and L'Uomo Vogue, amongst others. He writes the weekly essay series utopian drivel and is the co-host of Bad Gays.

Luzie Meyer is an artist, poet, musician, and translator based in Berlin. She graduated from Städelschule in Frankfurt in 2016. Her work has been shown in solo and group exhibitions, amongst others at Efremidis, Berlin (2020), Bel Ami, Los Angeles (2019), Sweetwater, Berlin (2019); Halle für Kunst, Lüneburg (2019); Kunstverein Braunschweig (2018); Kölnischer Kunstverein (2018); Tramway, Glasgow (2018); Le Bourgeois, London (2017); CACBM, Paris (2018) Nassauischer Kunstverein Wiesbaden (2017); Portikus, Frankfurt (2017).

Becket MWN is an Amsterdam-based writer and artist, whose recent projects have focused on the relationship between language, speaking, and the production of the self to question current forms of political subjectivity. He received his MFA from the University of Southern California in 2014, and was a resident artist at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam from 2015 to 2017. He has recently exhibited at SculptureCenter (New York), TG Gallery (Nottingham), Kunstfort bij Vijfhuizen (Haarlem), Root Canal (Amsterdam), and Vleeshal (Middelburg). His recent performances include Saliva (Barcelona) and HTSU Cooperative (Amsterdam).

Angharad Williams is an artist and writer who lives in Wales and Berlin. Recent solo projects, performances, and group exhibitions have taken place at Schiefe Zähne, Berlin; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Stadtgalerie Bern, Bern; Kunstverein Munich, Munich (all 2020); Haus zur Liebe, Schaffhausen; ICA, London; Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin; No Bounds Festival, Sheffield; Peak, London (all 2019); Radiophrenia, Glasgow; and Liszt, Berlin (all 2018). Forthcoming exhibitions will take place at Kevin Space, Vienna and G39, Cardiff. Since 2016 Williams has been working collaboratively with Swiss artist Mathis Gasser on Hergest, the latest installment of which is currently on display at the Swiss Institute, NYC

Bruno Zhu lives and works in Amsterdam. Recent projects include presentations at UKS in Oslo, Fragile in Berlin, Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem, EXILE in Vienna, Antenna Space in Shanghai and Kunsthalle Lissabon in Lisbon. Zhu is a member of A Maior, a curatorial program set in a home furnishings and clothing store in Viseu, Portugal.