

Ketty La Rocca

Dal momento in cui...

01.02 – 29.03.2020

[Link to the exhibition views](#)

[Link to the press release](#)

The work of the artist Ketty La Rocca occupies a unique place in the Italian artistic landscape of the 60s and 70s. Wit and critic are here at every corner, emerging from her use of non-sensical language and word-image association.

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Exhibition view, Ketty La Rocca, *Dal momento in cui...*, Fri Art, 2020. Photo: Guillaume Baeriswyl, Courtesy of Fri Art Kunsthalle

The exhibition

In close association with the artist's Estate in Florence, Fri Art presents a selection of works by the Italian artist Ketty La Rocca (1938-1976). The exhibition is composed mainly of collages that the artist created while she was a member of Gruppo 70, a Florence-based artist collective whose experiments were at the intersection of poetry, visual arts and media hijacking. Alongside this selection of collages, a series of works present the variety of media and approaches explored by the artist. Writing, sculpture and video bear witness to the poetic and personal quest of an artist who explores the potential of human communication and the finitude of words, images and gestures.

A selection of collages

Ketty La Rocca's collage practice emerged in parallel to her writing and poetry. While contributing to the aesthetics developed by the visual poetry of its generation, her works stand out through their wit and their way to play the text against the body. The shifts in meaning give a corrosive commentary on Italian society of the time, stuck between tradition and modernity. By associating appropriated images and words, they often, if not always, refer to a culturally charged context: the situation of women, neo-imperialism, consumerism, conservatism. Beyond, while always starting from a feminist engagement, they enter into conversation with anthropology, psychoanalysis and philosophy in a way still contemporary to us.



Portrait of Ketty La Rocca, Courtesy of the Ketty La Rocca Estate



Exhibition view, Ketty La Rocca, *Dal momento in cui...*, Fri Art, 2020. Photo: Guillaume Baeriswyl, Courtesy of Fri Art Kunsthalle

The video

In 1972, Ketty La Rocca created the video *Appendice per una supplica* in the context of the Venice Biennale. A composition of hands perform minimal gestures, entering into a dance of pre-language signs. In the distance of the retransmitted image, these gestures without semantic content indicate the pure potential and desire of communication. In the intimacy of the projection, they become at the same time close and distant from us.

Giorgio Agamben in his *Notes on the Gesture* (1992) wrote, addressing cinema, a cultural form that runs through La Rocca's work: a society that has lost its gestures tries at the same time to claim the return of what it has lost and to record this loss.



Appendice per una supplica, 1972, video, 9'30", still, Ketty La Rocca, 2020, Fri Art. Photo: Guillaume Baeriswyl
Courtesy of Fri Art Kunsthalle and the Ketty La Rocca Estate

The use of language and feminism

Her gradual emancipation from the Gruppo 70 and their ambitions to challenge the social order through art gives way to a more solitary practice, a practice that expresses a quest moved by a constant concern with the (im)possibility of knowing oneself, and the difficulty of communicating with others. Ketty La Rocca's oeuvre is marked by the search for another language, the imagination of a non-alienated mode of communication. This work on communication involves simple figures, gestures, isolated pronouns and/or punctuation. This quest connects her with the feminist struggles of the time, which undertook to deconstruct patriarchal society's use of communication as a form of domination.

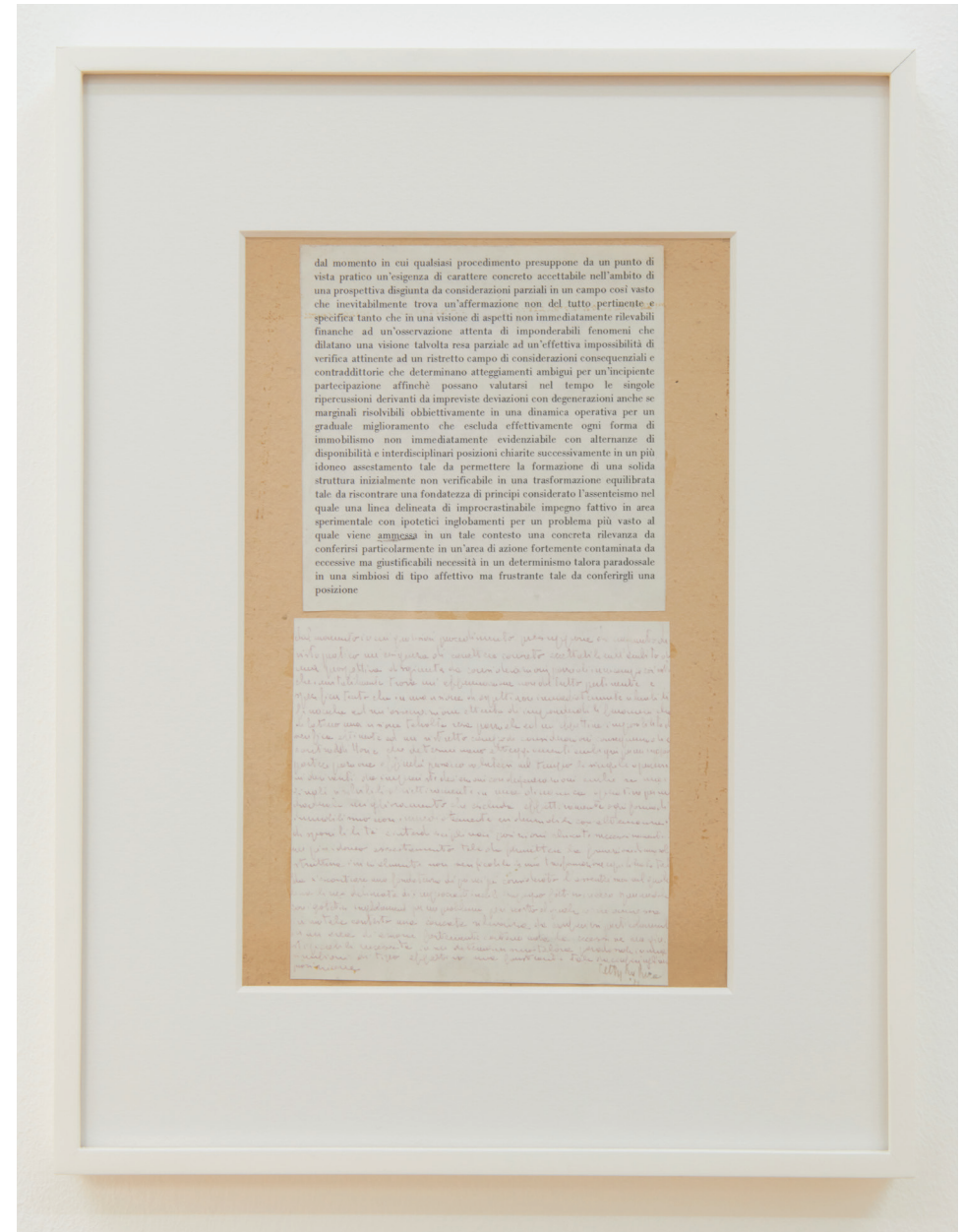
In her oeuvre, nonsense comes to play the strategic role of a poetic against the instrumentalization of language. She fashioned a radical questioning on the difficulty of communicating, on the solitude of human existence that persists in spite of language. An affective quality of the work is located between incarnation and power of abstraction. Who, then, was it addressed to? Who, then, now?



Diario della donna che lavora, 1965, 44.5 x 29 cm, collage on paper, Ketty La Rocca, 2020, Fri Art. Photo: Guillaume Baeriswyl
Courtesy of Fri Art Kunsthalle and the Ketty La Rocca Estate

Ketty La Rocca's work *Dal momento in cui...* has given the exhibition its title

Dal momento in cui... is a non-sensical text the artist wrote in 1971. It is composed of too long a sentence, a tortured analytical proposition that evokes the impossibility of grasping the world from a fixed point of view. It deliberately imitates a language contaminated by information and logic. Like an indecipherable mantra repeated over and over again, it circulates and imprints itself on several of the artist's works. An alienated ritornello, it poses as the product of a subjectivity contaminated by administered society that loses contact with the outside world. Its automatism testifies to a confinement in language, but also to the radical function of the speech act that, each time it is employed, opens onto a new space for all that is possible. "From the moment when...", sets the conditions for a situation that is different every time, like a throw of the dice...



Dal momento in cui..., 1971, 27.5 x 18 cm, machine and hand writing on paper, Ketty La Rocca, 2020, Fri Art. Photo: Guillaume Baeriswyl
Courtesy of Fri Art Kunsthalle and the Ketty La Rocca Estate

Ketty La Rocca, *Veline*, 1966-67

In 1967, the *Veline*, isolated sentences reproduced on sheets of paper, were distributed to the people by the artist in the streets during Gruppo 70 performances. Their minimal, aphoristic nature manages to isolate a power exercised by language, its function of address and its mystery.



Veline, 1966-7, Dimensions variable, printed color tissue papers, Dal momento in cui..., Ketty La Rocca, 2020, Fri Art
Photo: Guillaume Baeriswyl, Courtesy of Fri Art Kunsthalle and the Ketty La Rocca Estate



Ketty La Rocca, *Veline*, 1966 - 1967. Courtesy of the Ketty La Rocca Estate



Exhibition view, *Dal momento in cui...*, Ketty La Rocca, 2020, Fri Art. Photo: Guillaume Baeriswyl, Courtesy of Fri Art Kunsthalle

The Program

Friday 28.02.2020

On Ketty La Rocca

One day of thinking from the exhibition and the work of the artist

In order to put into perspective the exhibition dedicated to Ketty La Rocca, Fri Art organizes a day to think about the re-actualization of a work still too little known. This day of thinking is part of the current resurgence and rediscovery of the richness of artistic and feminist practices in post-war Italy, a society dominated by a family model and a conservative patriarchal Catholic social organization.

Three researchers, curators and specialist artists will take turns discussing the current state of her work. In which areas of tension do radical feminist subjectivities emerge? What are the problems of her current presentation, how and where does it address us?

Ketty La Rocca's work will be placed within the multiple forms of engagement in Italy at the time. The relationship between art, public space and feminism then forms a complex fabric. Some artists chose to leave the field of art that was structurally inadequate to the emergence of the female subject. Some opposing separatist groups withdrew from the structurally inadequate public space. How do these positions dialogue with the artist's position?



La Guerriglia, 1964-5, 49 x 38.5 cm, collage on paper, Ketty La Rocca, 2020, Fri Art
Photo: Guillaume Baeriswyl, Courtesy of Fri Art Kunsthalle and the Ketty La Rocca Estate

Barbara Casavechia, writer, independent curator and teacher at Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera based in Milan, will contribute to this day by presenting new reflections on Ketty La Rocca's place in the artistic field, on the difficulty of being a committed artist without being reduced to feminist discourses alone. The strategies of silence, withdrawal and illegibility present in the artist's work will be evoked.

Camilla Paolino, writer, independent curator, CCC HEAD, Genève, will talk about the tensions between the separatism of self-awareness groups and the rejection of artistic production considered then as participating at the structural level of the reproduction of hetero-patriarchal culture. These questions of the fragmentation of the space of democratic speech resonate in the current moment, which sees the resurgence of identity questions at the heart of reactionary policies and consequently of artistic practices.

Sally Schonfeld (artist, Zürich) will discuss with us her important research on the artist, presented at the Swiss Institute in Rome in 2016 in her exhibition *The Ketty La Rocca Research Centre*.

Eglė Kulbokaitė and Dorota Gawęda *Mouthless*

01.02 – 29.03.2020

For their first monographic exhibition in a Swiss institution, Eglė Kulbokaitė and Dorota Gawęda transform Fri Art into a place of reception sensitive to the most contemporary fears. The environment created for the exhibition is a fragmented fiction in which eco-feminism theory, urban legends, witches trials, concrete geographical landmarks and impending ecological drama are mixed. Screens, sounds, smells, light effects, objects, texts address the visitor very directly and provoke his/her reflection. Through its narratives, the exhibition problematizes the distribution of the natural and the technological, the archaic and the futuristic, the real and its mediation. The «as if», the speculative aspect of fiction questions our relationship to the production of truth. Borrowings from the popular genres of science fiction and horror reflect the unstable condition of the bodies that are currently going through an identity and ecological crisis. The exhibition will extend beyond Fri Art exhibition rooms. A diorama installed in the WallRiss art space will be used as a location for filming and production. This location will also serve as a relay antenna for broadcasting in the city centre. The exhibition is imagined as a rumor spreading throughout the city of Fribourg.



Death by Landscape (Fribourg), 2020, 262 x 139,3 cm. Digital print on glass, lead (Andreas Vetterli workshop), larch wood frame, Dorota Gawęda and Eglė Kulbokaitė, *Mouthless*, Fri Art. Photo: Guillaume Baeriswyl, Courtesy of Fri Art Kunsthalle

Dorota Gawęda (*1986, Lublin / Basel) and Eglė Kulbokaitė (*1987 Kaunas / Basel) began their collaboration in 2013, with their extended serial project Young Girl Reading Group (YGRG). Under this project, they organized more than 150 reading groups and performances at a sustained pace. Over the past six years, they have produced performances and solo exhibitions in numerous places, among the most recent, *Sunk into it, part of it* at Futura, Prague (2019); *I get those gossebumps everytime you come around* at Lucas Hirsch Gallery, Düsseldorf (2018); YGRG 154X: *reading with the single hand V* at Cell Project Space, London (2018), and participated in group shows such as 13th Baltic Triennial, Vilnius/Riga/Tallinn (2018); the 6th Athens Biennale (2018), or the 6th Moscow Biennale for Young Art at MMOMA (2018).

Realisation: Fri Art, Kunsthalle Fribourg in collaboration with WallRiss

Next events

Sa 15.02.2020, 17:00

Guided parcours

Fri Art › Funiculaire › WallRiss

The Program

Fr 28.02.2020

On Ketty La Rocca

with Camilla Paolino (writer, independent curator, CCC HEAD, Genève)

Barbara Casavecchia (writer, independent curator, teacher, Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera, Milano)

Sally Schonfeldt (artist, Zürich)

Sa 29.02.2020

On Reception

organized with Geraldine Tedder (writer, independent curator, Zürich)

videos by Chantal Kaufmann (artist, Vienna)

Lecture by Ian Wooldridge (artist, Zürich)

Concert by L'Acte pur (Andreas Hochuli and Tristan Lavoyer; Lausanne, Genève)

Su 22.03.2020, 10:30 – 13:30

Brunch du FIFF

No Club Sunday

Su 22.03.2020, 16:00

presented by Strecke

Fri Bar II

Sa 28.03.2020, 22:45 at Cinéma Rex (Fribourg)

Final Screening *Mouthless* by Dorota Gawęda and Eglė Kulbokaitė

Thanks to

The artists - eikon - anyma (Michael Egger) - Ferme de La Fayel, Granges-Paccot - Fritz Schiffers
- Erik Raynal - Juliette Ruetz - Julia Moritz - Juno Moritz - Azur Sabic - Amadeus Vogelsang -
International Flavors and Fragrances Inc. - Cottweiler - Ninamounah - Mainline: RUS/Fr.CA/DE
- CC-steding jewelry - Roni Ilan - Fila - Ocularis - Kara

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