

HOLLYBUSH GARDENS IS DELIGHTED TO PRESENT

WHEN MY EYES SAW AND WHEN MY EARS HEARD

An exhibition with Manon de Boer, Adam Christensen, Simone Forti, Luca Frei, Charlotte Prodger, Kenneth Tam.

Preview: Thursday 21 September 6.30 - 8.30 PM.

See-Saw by Simone Forti, directed by Luca Frei will take place during the opening, 21 September at 7.30 PM.

A further performance will take place on the last day of the exhibition at 2 pm, 28 October.

Exhibition: 22 September - 28 October

When my eyes saw and when my ears heard is an exhibition that attends to the body, considering an intricate space where relationships coalesce between gesture, expression and corporality in a place of active production. At times economical and at others excessive, the artists engage with histories, methods and material that filter into how our experiences come into play. A leitmotif could be how visual language and art history become reimagined and embedded within a set of new possibilities, layering meaning that activates subject positions and a questioning of current social behaviours and codes.

The title is taken from a poem by Swedish poet Per-Erik Rundqvist. The poem can be understood to be speaking about the moment when we become aware of something and alive to something; the moment when our consciousness becomes active - that one is something and part of the world amongst other things. This coming into awareness lies at the centre of creativity. The works selected for this show pay particular attention to this experience.

Manon de Boer, *An Experiment in Leisure*

16mm scanned to digital file, colour, 1:66, stereo, Dutch, English & French spoken, English subtitled, BE, 2016, 36'. Excerpts of texts by psychoanalyst Marion Milner (1900-1998) on concentration, the body, repetition, daydreaming and open-ended time as conditions for creation are read and reflected upon by different artists.

These voices and the silences between them, images of a seascape in Norway and of the artists' workspaces, as well as sounds from the Norwegian coast create parallel spaces, each following their own rhythm. The resulting experience of time resonates with Milner's idea of leisure: not a moment opposed to work, but a time allowing us to perceive and think freely without an immediate objective.

Adam Christensen

Melding video, performance, writing, music, installation and fabric works Christensen's practice is informed by his environment; emotionally as well as materially. The work draws on elements of biography and theatricality that sometimes fails to distinguish the line between the artist and viewer, life and fiction. Adam also performs with the music project Ectopia.

See-Saw by Simone Forti, directed by Luca Frei.

See-Saw (1960) explores movement through improvisation and chance. "The whole structure of plank and performers rests on one point [...] Any change in the arrangement of body parts, the slightest change of position by either performer, affects the balance of the entire setup." ¹ The use of plywood props, as in *See-Saw*, can be seen as an attempt to renegotiate the traditional horizontal stage and its relationship to the body, challenging the very "preconceptions about what constitutes dance, movement, and composition."²

Luca Frei's contribution to the piece consists in duplicating the saw-horses, to have two of them instead of one, and to have them placed in different parts of the exhibition. Before starting a new performance, the dancers pick up the plank from where it was previously left, carry it through the exhibition to the other saw-horse, and start from there. Frei's first question was how to consider the plywood prop for *See-Saw* in relation to the other works in the exhibition, or how to make it speak when not in use.

Luca Frei *Idle*, 2017

Conceived after having worked with Simone Forti on the re-staging of *See-Saw* in 2015-2016 at Modern Museet, Stockholm and Malmö, *Idle* can be read as a translation of *See-Saw* into an inert sculpture. The structure; a chair without the seating support, hold planks with figure like shapes, precariously balancing. The figures appear restless, ready to jump up or collapse back at any moment.

Charlotte Prodger, *Sophie With Sheets*, 2010, is a series of four photographic prints made while studying at Calarts in 2009-10 where she was absorbing herself in their 16mm film darkrooms, taking semiotics classes and probing the reproductive properties of Xerox. *Sophie with Sheets* is composed of images within an image. Prodger used monochrome 35mm slide film to document a woman's hands unfurling four photocopied sheets she found in an empty classroom at Calarts. The sheets - a teaching aid left behind by an animation drawing class - depict a man's fist rotating in sequential units; their function to teach students of cell animation how to draw anatomical movement frame by frame. This framing of bodily gesture through a queer lens is an early example of Prodger's ongoing interest in the tension between language and material - rubbing the formal parameters of time and technology up against autobiographical explorations of coded queer identity, female masculinity and the intimate contingency of materials.

Kenneth Tam, *Breakfast in Bed*, 2016

The various activity-based groups that men create for socialising and bonding provides the point of departure for *Breakfast in Bed*. The project began by recruiting seven non-actors to participate in a mock men's social club, the activities of which were filmed in a constructed set. Part social experiment, part absurdist theatre, this piece is organised around the constructions of masculinity and the male body through role-playing, team-building exercises, and improvised actions that was developed with the participants throughout the process under Tam's loose direction. Through staged play, the video examines the constructed identities that the men come to rely on in a group setting while enabling and facilitating their agency to perform themselves in front of the camera.

Footnotes:

1. Simone Forti, "See-Saw" in *Handbook in Motion* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1974) p 39
2. Virginia B. Spivey, "The Minimal Presence of Simone Forti" in *Women's Art Journal*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 2009) p. 7

Please contact karin@hollybushgardens.co.uk for images and further information.
Gallery open: Wednesday - Friday 11 - 6 pm & Saturday 12 - 5 pm or by appointment

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