

Press Release

Lisson Presents... Speech Act

25 November 2017 – 13 January 2018

67 Lisson Street, London

'Lisson Presents... Speech Act' offers insight into the way in which the construction of image and text populate the political imaginary through the work of Allora & Calzadilla, Susan Hiller and Laure Prouvost. Though different in their aesthetic and political register, each of the works presented in the presentation reflect on the relationship between language and its delivery apparatus, highlighting the coercive potential of such coalescence in the public domain. Either as subversive stratagem or as a critique of the pervasiveness of the statements, messages and signs that bombard us daily, language is held accountable and simultaneously offered as a subterfuge to question the political rhetoric and the homogenisation of its visual delivery in our current moment.

Allora & Calzadilla's film titled *Amphibious (Login-Logout)* (2005) occurs on the Pearl River Delta region in the People's Republic of China and follows a group of turtles that have been placed on top of a wooden log as they are carried along the currents of the Pearl River. The turtles drift slowly along the fast amphibious network of sea and land, mirroring import-export activities, where the flow of capital and labour form the undercurrent of the harbour-port region flourishing in the wake of the new globalised economy. Allora & Calzadilla's *Figures of Speech* (2007), a photographic work that continues the artists' investigation into the meaning and impact of political rhetoric, utilises images and newspaper cuttings from recent world events. The imagery, compositions of human figures, graphically forms individual letters and spells out quotations, thus functioning as a new figurative alphabet.

The paintings *Brickwork* (1984) and *Native* (1984) by Susan Hiller relate to her interest in automatic writing, a technique she first experimented with in the early 1970s and to which she has frequently returned. Part of her *Home Truth* series, the works are composed of decorative wallpaper – the type usually designed for the spaces in which children dream and are socialised – layered with sub-conscious and free-association graffiti-type markings. For these works Hiller deliberately selected wallpaper that appeared to be patronising and pre-describing to gender stereotypes through their repetitive motifs, which are then interrupted by her automatic scripts. These paintings are very rare as many ended up being burned and transformed into ashes for Hiller's *Relics* works.

Laure Prouvost's *It, heat, hit* (2010) constructs and propels an inferred story through a fast-moving sequence of written commentary and excerpts of everyday incidents and pictures that have been filmed by the artist. Statements of love and implied violence follow innocent and pleasing images, such as a swimming frog or snowy street scene. These are inter-cut with strange, disconnected images, such as close-ups of flowers, body parts or food. The mood of the film gradually becomes darker and more unsettling, though nothing is stated directly. The growing intensity is reinforced by the oppressive rhythm of a drum, which accompanies snatches of music and speech. Repeated viewing subtly shifts what is understood each time, as Prouvost highlights the slipperiness of meaning and notions of reality.

'Lisson Presents...' is a special programme of curated exhibitions presented at 67 Lisson Street in London and occasional off-site locations around the world. First launched at Lisson Gallery London in 2009 to explore narratives of contemporary art conveyed through the gallery's history, the programme presents work by new and emerging artists alongside focused displays by established gallery artists. Relaunched this year as part of Lisson Gallery's 50th anniversary celebrations, this new iteration of 'Lisson Presents...' will run in parallel with the main exhibition programme. It operates as a dedicated curatorial platform to assert and question the relationship between new and historical artwork.

With special thanks to Lynton Talbot.

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and develops 54 international artists across two exhibition spaces in London and two in New York. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie, to the public for the first time. In addition to a number of renowned artist estates, including Roy Colmer, the Leon Polk Smith Foundation and the John Latham Foundation, the gallery represents leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller and Tatsuo Miyajima. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes and Wael Shawky.

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