

You always, always, always, do that.
- *Yes. You say that all the time.*

Group Exhibition with:
Adrian Williams, Mathilde Rosier, Skafte Kuhn, Shannon Bool

06.12.2009 – 06.02.2010

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The dialog is set: *You always, always, always do that. – Yes. you say that all the time.* The situation is open: who is speaking? Who answers? And what exactly is she or he doing? Is it about the expression of critique of recognition? One is directly involved in subjective assessments like the situation of this dialog and what significance this narrative fragment might take on. An endless spiral of interpretive possibilities begins, driven by personal notions and the narrative structures that are represented here verbally.

The works of Adrian Williams, Mathilde Rosier, Skafte Kuhn, and Shannon Bool are characterized by exactly this strategy: a few elements of a narrative structure are represented precisely, while at the same time the starting point or beginning of the story remains open. The works stretch from the allusion to a performative plot to the codes of theater and film performance. The consideration about how narrative of purely oral transmission can be transferred to representation in and of space as well as in bodily gesture plays a decisive role.

Adrian Williams's works tell stories in the form of performances, sound pieces, interventions, films, objects, and works on paper. She invents fictional characters and embeds them in part in real situations. The title of the exhibition comes from Adrian Williams' paper work of the same name *You Always, Always, Always Do That. – Yes. You Say That All the Time.* This piece is part of a new work complex that apparently combines documentary photographs associatively with prose-like texts handwritten by Adrian Williams. Instead of constructing a clear content, this form of combining text and image, opening multilayered variants for the respective narrative to be continued or interpreted. Often, in Adrian Williams' work the spoken word only temporarily takes on a spatial presence, as in the performance *Bat Song: Rehearsals for an Audio Play.* During the performance, which lasts several days, she sets a short story to music live with a musician, a singer, a sound engineer, and a narrator. The story is about a woman who suffers from a speech disorder that the woman herself is initially not aware of. A specialist treats the disorder by having the woman sing while hanging upside down. In the Karlsruhe exhibition, a sound recording can be heard of his performance penetrating almost the entire exhibition space, like a conversation that one hears at a distance, uninvited.

Mathilde Rosier's installations, sculptures, paper works, film and music performances often embody fictional offshoots or parts of a narrative. Constellations of self-made costumes, mystic representations of animals or nature often seem like props, an abandoned stage set, or solitary protagonists of a narrative that is entirely unfamiliar. The combination of painting, film, and theater constructs oneiric situations that allow the beholder to lose any sense of space and time. At the same time, within these "dream states," characterized by empathy, a precise and conceptual analysis of codes and effects of various forms of representation in our society takes place. Beside the paper works, the exhibition also includes the installation and 8-minute film *Morgenrock*, which was made on the occasion of Mathilde Rosier's performance *Morgenrock* at Kunsthalle Baden-Baden in the summer of 2009. The performance, around 30 minutes long, celebrated in real time the sunrise. The audience met at 5 am in a park near the Kunsthalle. A harpist played a piece composed by Mathilde Rosier, which was simultaneously interpreted by a professional dancer. The film uses the material shot there and generates in its editing and temporal abbreviation a new perspective on the same plot. The installation integrates the costume of the dancer. If during the performance real birds flew through the landscape scenery, now the birds made of paper and gouache on the inside of the coat refer to this past experience.

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Skafe Kuhn's installations and paper works are characterized by an engagement with theater, music, and literature from various eras. Sources are writings by Shakespeare, Rilke, Schlegel, as well as song texts by contemporary punk and gothic bands like Joy Division, Sister of Mercy or Anne Clark, two poles that are very distinct from one another in their mode of expression. In his works, however, Skafe Kuhn crystallizes their thematic commonalities. At issue are the defined descriptions of situations and mental states. One of the oft-repeated thematic motifs here is darkness in all its variations. The starting point consists of magical dream realities that are full of hints and allusions. The night here becomes a space for the increased perception of inside and outside, an open space for the reflection on human existence and its longings, fears, and hopes. The three-part work on paper presented in the exhibition shows mystical figures that could have stepped out of an Edgar Allan Poe story. Skafe translated the incomprehensibility of fantastic content into a part figurative, part abstract fusion of constructivist and amorphous elements.

Shannon Bool's architectural interventions, painting, and paper works embody a conceptual play with the form and content of cultural codes of narratives. Her works generate a surface that is seductive for the beholder, combining elements of "high" and "low" culture, ornament and perspective. In so doing, literary and theatrical sources are just as relevant as academic texts from psychoanalysis. Although based on numerous theoretical sources, all her works structure the information as purely visual vocabulary that abducts the culturally shaped gaze of the beholder to an analytic space of perception behind the visible. This form of moving toward a non-verbal form of narrative is expressed in a special way in Shannon Bool's photogram *The Serpent Heart*. The uniformly smooth surface of the photogram is preceded by the performative process of collage: Shannon Bool produces her "light collages" by placing transparent, opaque, and semi-transparent objects and foils on light-sensitive paper. *The Serpent Heart* shows a collage that uses a 1946 stage-photograph of the dancer Martha Graham showing her performing Medusa on a set designed by Isamu Noguchi. The formal performativity of the process of creation is translated to the motif of dance theater as non-verbal expression of a story in physical gesture, music, and space.

Brief biographies:

Adrian Williams (born in 1979, US). Upcoming: 2010 Art Statements / Art 41 Basel with Galerie Iris Kadel. Skafe Kuhn (born in 1969, Germany). Current exhibition: Mehr als ein T-Shirt, Bielefelder Kunstverein, Biefeld, Germany. Mathilde Rosier: forthcoming, February 2010 individual exhibition, Musée Jeu de Paume, Paris. Shannon Bool: forthcoming: June 2010 and November 2010 Individual exhibitions GAK / Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst Bremen, DE und CRAC / Musée d'Art Moderne Alsace, Altkirch, FR.

For more information about these artists, visit our website at www.iris-kadel.de.