

December 8, 2016 to February 18, 2017

Melanie Gilligan: 2016 Capp Street Project Artist-in-Residence

Curated by Leila Grothe

As the 2016 Capp Street Project Artist-in-Residence, Canadian artist Melanie Gilligan will spend the fall of 2016 in San Francisco. Although she has worked with video, performance, text, installation, and music, her most recent works have consisted of an ongoing series of videos produced as television episodes, which investigate contemporary media, technology, and political economies. The vision she paints of the future is speculative and dystopian but also not dramatically different from the present, where bodies are merged with “big data” and capital. Life under late capitalism is the primary condition under consideration in Gilligan’s episodic narratives, and she displays her work in environments that address concepts of ‘immersion’ and ‘community’ in their very structure. Gilligan’s work occupies an atypical territory between the film and fine art worlds. She typically makes low-budget films that merge distinctions between television and film, art gallery and cinema, documentary and fiction. Most of her videos are available online, free of charge.

At the Wattis, Gilligan will produce a new scripted fiction video focusing on the local radical poetry community and the recent history of political protest in the Bay Area. Though she will write, direct, and edit the video, Gilligan sees her process as an open-ended collaboration, often intuitive and improvised with her actors and film crew. The design of Gilligan’s exhibition will create multiple avenues for the audience to encounter the work, using built structures and wireless headphones, in a rejection of a more standard theater screening setting.

As a Capp Street Project Resident, Gilligan will engage directly with Fine Arts students at CCA by teaching a graduate seminar course. The aim of the course will be to examine how questions of form relate to a materialist art practice by examining a range of visual art and moving image works from installation art to experimental and documentary film to poetry. With her students, Gilligan will look at contemporary debates around the representation of economic and social systems in popular moving image forms, as well as histories of experimental and documentary film, alternative television and filmmaking, and political theatrical. A further aspect of the seminar will involve collaborative work with the students as part of her video project being developing for the Wattis exhibition.

Melanie Gilligan (b. 1979 in Toronto. Lives and works in London and New York) graduated from Central Saint Martins in London in 2002, from the Whitney Museum of American Art’s Independent Study Program in 2005. Recent solo exhibitions include Presentation House Gallery in Vancouver (2010), Banff Centre in Alberta (2010), Kölnischer Kunstverein in Cologne, and Transmission Gallery in Glasgow (both 2008). Critical writing is a central part of her practice, and she has contributed to art magazines and journals such as *Texte zur Kunst* and *Artforum*.