

Writing with the other hand is imagining  
An Exhibition in Two Studies

*Writing with the other hand is imagining* is a group show choreographed in two studies of assignments, talks, workshops and artworks by **Luis Camnitzer, Dina Danish, Redmond Entwistle, Malak Helmy, Adelita Husni-Bey, Parallel Lines, Mladen Stilinović** and **Katarina Zdjelar**. The exhibition includes texts on the artists' works by writer and curator **Sara Dolfi Agostini**.

Both studies inspire to derail the contours of typecast forms and narratives by tracing out new approaches to learning and self-organizing knowledge. How can we learn to construct, not instruct? Can the dominant be untaught? How do we challenge indoctrination? We perceive and we listen, we see before we name things, before we speak, read, and write.

On the opening night *Beirut* launches **Mada Masr the print vol.0**, a one-off print edition that expounds notions of making sense in the realm of news production, where layers of consciousness unfold between the breaking, witnessing, writing and analyzing of events. The print is commissioned by *Beirut* on the occasion of the exhibition *Unexpected Encounters* at **Camera Austria** in Graz.

## Study One

19 September–12 October, 2013, with works by Luis Camnitzer, Dina Danish, Redmond Entwistle, Parallel Lines, Mladen Stilinović and Katarina Zdjelar

The first study taxes the normative standards of utterance, it sifts through constellations of community, explores the dynamics at play within the institutional space of higher education and challenges the demand to negotiate the politics of art practice through language. It looks at notions of learning and educating through the prism, the weight and the role of language (intended as a system of accepted codes and habits) in defining, shaping and ultimately leading human's capacity for thought, and action.

In a pink wall-painting with a black handwritten statement infiltrated by an eye-catching red negation, we are told that *An Artist Who Cannot Speak English Is No Artist*. Here, colours are connotations of alternative ideologies: pink stands for capitalism, while red is the sacred symbol of Communism, though its intensity also evokes love and blood. In this work **Mladen Stilinović** warns

the artist of the impossibility to resolve the conflict between the two grand narratives of the XX century (whose awkward proximity is reflected in the likeness of the colours), while highlighting the authority of the Anglo-Saxon culture in certifying the value of an artwork outside the frontiers of a specific country.

Statements are poetry in **Luis Camnitzer's** series of *Assignments*, where riddles deliberately fluctuate between an abstract and poetic lyricism and a contextual engagement with the reality of life. Whereas education is often understood as being about learning a set of instructions, Camnitzer suggests to appropriate art as a means to interact with, observe, possess the world through our own intuitions and ideas.

*Elizabeth Birthday is on the Third Thursday of this Month* is part of the on-going project Tongue-Twisters Studies by **Dina Danish**. The impossibility of the human pronunciation of a tongue twister is overcome by its very enactment. At the core of the work lies the emphasizing of the necessity of finding alternatives to utterance, resulting in a dadaistic demystification of our most basic and apparently innocent linguistic habits, highlighting how they intertwine with social and institutional practices.

**Katarina Zdjelar** portrays a young man mimicking the exercises put forward by a British speech therapist to remove his foreign accent in her video installation *The Perfect Sound* - sounds lacking verbal meaning, lullabies for the yet to become. Zdjelar prompts how the pitched process of appropriating the standards of global communication entails gradually erasing our identity through empty reiterations with which to achieve homogenization.

*Neither Forever Nor Instant* by **Parallel Lines** (a documentary project led by five artists and writers) explores the affect of identifying with a movement, the interval between moments of political action, and the suspension of subjectivity in historical time. For this work they collaborated with FIERCE, an organization led by queer youth of color, whose activism in the West Village and the piers have engaged the queer histories of these neighborhoods, and redirected their urban development. The video draws from FIERCE's West Village Walking Tour, where members, allies and donors are introduced to sites with historical and political significance for community organizing and future sites of action.

The dynamics at play at the legendary and highly influential California Institute of the Arts are explored in **Redmond Entwistle's** film *Walk Through*. Combining archival material and present day footage, Entwistle revisits some key moments of CalArts past – in particular Michael Asher's Crits,

intense 'Post Studio' group sessions in which the students discussed each other's projects – in order to operate a critical analysis on the methods, purpose and cultural value of artistic education.

Study Two 12–27 October, 2013

with works by Luis Camnitzer, Malak Helmy, Adelita Husni-Bey, Mladen Stilinović

**Study Two** sounds the possibilities for a space where the self is yet to become: Can the absence of references encourage social and political imagination? Can we reinvent the codes we are meant to adhere to? The works in this study foster a space for redefining coexistence, and propose ways to nourish creativity.

On the opening night, Adelita Husni-Bey and Motaz Attalla will be in conversation with Antonia Alampi to discuss some of the topics raised by the artist's research in relation to the exhibition: education, radical pedagogy and self-organized learning apropos to institutionalism, 'free-school' models and anarcho-collectivism.

**Mladen Stilinović's** wall painting is still warning us that the conflict between the two grand ideologies of the XX century has resulted in the authority of the Anglo-Saxon language in defining cultural capital (of an artwork). **Luis Camnitzer's** poetry in statements keeps its presence in his series of *Assignments*. Whereas education is often understood as being about learning through instruction, Camnitzer suggests to appropriate art as a means to interact with, observe and possess the world through our own intuition and ideas. Children are now called to explore solutions when *PYRAMIDS HAVE BEEN OUTLAWED. WHAT ALTERNATIVE DO YOU PROPOSE?*, a new work the artist conceived for this exhibition. In a workshop organized in collaboration with **Alwan Wa Awtar** NGO and coordinated by **Alia Mossallam**, kids at the age of 8-11 years can rethink the emblematic power of pyramids from different angles, and propose substitutes in their absence.

Children are also in charge in **Adelita Husni-Bey's** film *Postcards from the Desert Island*. For her project, Husni-Bey asked a group of 7-10 year old students at the Ecole Vitruve (a self-run elementary public institute that practices experimental educational models) to build a desert island in their school hall during a 3-week workshop. In the resulting film and installation, we witness how the kids come to terms with notions of self-management, the lack of institutions, the question of punishment and power struggle, immigration issues, the significance of public space and civic disobedience. Through an undirected practice of anarcho-collectivism, they re-imagine institutions, social codes and behaviors. Yet, on another island, we consider the psyche of a unique type of lyrebird who lives on an online radio station. The lyrebird is an Australian bird species known for its particular dexterity of voice and superb mimicry skills, which it uses as mating performance but

also as survival technique, allowing it to fake the call of other birds and sounds in its environs. In *Storytime with Lyrebird* **Malak Helmy** and voice actor **Simeon Roos** consider what the bird might say and how it would speak, what would become of its nature, mind and mimicry if its habitat was that of an online radio island: a space with no dimensions, nature, environment, resonance and sound to mimic. How could he (and we) live in just a possible sludge of text flowing past which it can only read and echo to itself?

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