

Sharon Hayes
An Army of Lovers Cannot Lose
March 3 – April 10, 2021
in collaboration with Tanya Leighton, Berlin

Kristina Kite and Tanya Leighton are pleased to present the first solo exhibition by Sharon Hayes in Los Angeles. *An Army of Lovers Cannot Lose* features Sharon Hayes's newest edition of her *Ricerche* project, *Ricerche: two*, which continues her ongoing interest in how intimate speech can also be political speech and the interplay between one's individual subjectivity and sense of belonging to a group.

Sharon Hayes's evolving *Ricerche* project, composed of multiple video works examining gender, sexuality and contemporary collective identifications, is made in dialogue with *Comizi d'amore* (1964), Pier Paolo Pasolini's documentary on sex and relations. Hayes adapts the structure of *Comizi d'amore* using the format of the group interview to interrogate notions of identity, affinity, and difference among individuals who are bound together by choice and circumstance. Hayes's interviews with different groups specifically examine non-heteronormative family structures and non-binary gender identifications and build a living archive of voices on the challenges of owning one's identity – conversations with a radical, transformative potential.

In *Ricerche: two* (2020), Hayes talks to players from two U.S. women's tackle football teams – the Arlington Impact and the Dallas Elite Mustangs. Following her commitment to interviewing people in groups, Hayes assembles 22 players to discuss their relationship with the sport, what role gender plays on the field and off, and the sport's impact on how they see themselves as athletes, mothers, daughters, workers, citizens, and sexual and romantic partners. The camera catches laughter, attentive listening, raised eyebrows, sideways glances, clapping, nodding, and hums of agreement or dissent, demonstrating the constant negotiations of trust, empathy, difference, and shared purpose. Filmed at close range in early 2020 just before the pandemic took hold, the women form a collective body, casually touching -- a uniquely charged dynamic in an era of social distancing. The wide curved projection screen was designed by Hayes to evoke the containment of a huddle.

Presented alongside the video, Hayes's silkscreened prints titled *(W)OM(E)N* (2015) are taken from an image of a banner carried in the Women's Strike for Equality that took place across the U.S. on August 26th, 1970. The banner read "WOMEN OF THE WORLD UNITE!" Hayes singles out the word "women" and prints each letter individually to the approximate scale of the original banner. The material transformation of the individual letters alters the original's legibility and seemingly straightforward declaration of meaning. In the gallery, only the W and E are displayed, bringing into question the fragility of collective identification as well as the failure of "woman" to ever be a unifying, collective "we."

The exhibition continues into the back space with *Ricerche: one* (2019). In this video diptych, Hayes gathered groups of children and begins by asking the question: "Where do babies come from?" Shot over one week in Provincetown, MA, all of the participants in Hayes's video are the children of queer or gender nonconforming parents. The work is composed of interviews with two age groups: 5–8-year-olds and young adults. Similar to those in Pasolini's interviews, the young children on screen produce delightfully fragmented answers that mix imagination, fantasy, and words repeated from things adults have said to them. The young adults on the opposite screen are deeply experienced with the narrative of their families and their births, having had to account for them repeatedly over the two or three decades of their lives. These encounters address complex family formations and the role of kids in the evolving political landscape of queerness in the U.S.

The newest works in the exhibition are Hayes's textile banners *What Do We Want, When Will This End?* and *The Time is Now* (2021). Facing the wall, these banners are hung back to front to inverse its slogan, which bleeds through the fabric. Scraps of *The New York Times* articles that the artist has been collecting over the past year, presumably used as a drop cloth during the banner's making, remain stuck to the paint on what is now the front of the banner. These works draw inspiration from an ERA YES banner that Hayes came across in an archival box in the Tamiment Collection in New York. The errant fragments of newspaper both ground the historicity of the banners and disturb it. While the banners slogans "appear"

again and again over decades of collective protest, the snippets of recent news fix the time as that of “now”. Stuck together but also at odds, the two sides of the banner surface the tensions, pains and pleasures in acting urgently against recurring tides of hatred, violence, inaction, and catastrophe.

Sharon Hayes uses photography, film, video, sound, and performance to examine the intersection between the personal and the political. An established line of enquiry throughout her multi-disciplinary practice is the transformative power of language. Hayes pays particular attention to the language of twentieth century protest groups, investigating the history and construction of collective subject formation. She invites viewers and participants to re-experience moments of political and cultural oppression by staging protests, delivering speeches, and re-performing demonstrations. Through these methods of enactment, Hayes is engaging in what she calls “oral translation.” Her work highlights the friction between common activities and personal actions— examining how the collective imaginary is built.

Hayes has been the subject of retrospectives at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; and Moderna Museet, Stockholm. Her works have been shown internationally, including at the 55th Venice Biennale in Italy and at the 10th Gwangju Biennale in Korea. Hayes’s work is included in the collections of Tate, London; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Dallas Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen; Museum of Modern Art Warsaw; among many others. Hayes lives and works in Philadelphia, where she holds the position of Associate Professor of Fine Arts at the University of Pennsylvania.

Tanya Leighton, Berlin, established in 2008, is dedicated to developing a cross-disciplinary, trans-generational gallery program with off-site projects, in collaboration with artists, filmmakers, critics, art historians, and curators. Its international exhibition program reflects a variety of opinions and practices as well as Leighton’s associations with American and British experimental cinema, artist’s film and video, performance, minimal and conceptual art.

CREDITS

Ricerche: one, 2019

Interviewees – 5-8-year-olds:

Meryl Scholfield	Finley Scholfield	Tristan Sylvestre-Margolis
Shane Pierson	Ella Craghead-Goldman	Jillian Nichols
Winter Collins	Orion Akash Phelps	Dylan Sumner
Benjamin Braden-Forge	Ella Herwick-Poutre	Noemi Herwick-Poutre
Elise Inkster	Layne Joheim	Christian Wells Baylis-Gaba
Grayson McFerrin Hogan	Grayson McSweeney	Taylor Andrepont-Aycock
Tatum Andrepont-Aycock	Abby Boscher-Walsh	Ethan Boscher-Walsh
Guiliana M. Palmieri	Natalia Reichbach-Soto	Sophie Pennock Collins
Rosie Carioti-Darling	Elizabeth Davis	

Interviewees – young adults/adults:

Brooke Albers	Jordan Polcyn-Evans	Angel Martin
Kerry Cullen	Ash Lumpkin	Jamie Lee Bergeron-Beamon
Robin Marquis	Courtney Faria	Ryan Kenji Keone Kuramitsu
Elijah Martin	Emmet Dupont	Malina Simard-Halm
Devan Wells	Jacob Polcyn-Evans	Dominik Doemer

Director of Photographer/Cameraperson: Martina Radwan

Production Manager: Lala Drew

Sound Recorder: EE Miller

Sound Mix: Josh Allen

Ricerche: two, 2020

Participating Players from Arlington Impact, Division I, Women's Football Alliance (WFA):

Charise "CJ" Blacksher	Epiphany Carroll	Alaydrain Cofer
Chandra Collier	Ken Gabriel	Pareishia "Gym Shoes" Green
Bethany Lartigue	Brittany Myers	D'Angela Marie
"Deezy" Ricks	Kim Rose	Tara Thomas
Courtnei "Luckey" Townson	Tatanisha "Tito" Young	

Participating Players from Dallas Elite Mustangs, Division I, Women's Football Alliance (WFA):

Erika Bobo	Arebria Burr	Tatum Curtis
Tiara Darby	Cheyenne Gutierrez	Yazmin Lopez
Titiana Smith	Alexias Stricklin	Kesz Wesley

Director of Photography: Michelle Lawler

Production Manager: Althea M. Rao

Outreach Coordinator: Jackie Soro

Camera: Sean Lyons

Sound Recorder: Leslie Francis

Key Grip: David Lynn

Additional Grip: Prentice Branzet, Lonnie Butts

DIT: Kyle Novak

Still Photographer: Rolando Sepulveda II

Production Assistants: Gabriella Mykal Smith, Alex Sigthenhorst

Ricerche: two was commissioned by the Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia in 2020.

To schedule an appointment, please email Kristina Kite at kristina@kristinakitegallery.la or call/text to (323) 804-1016; or Tanya Leighton at tanya@tanyaleighton.com.

Masks and social distancing required.