

Tanya Leighton

'An Army of Lovers Cannot Lose'
Sharon Hayes
3 March – 10 April 2021
Kristina Kite Gallery, Los Angeles

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Tanya Leighton, Berlin with Kristina Kite Gallery, Los Angeles
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Tanya Leighton is pleased to present the first solo exhibition by Sharon Hayes in Los Angeles at Kristina Kite Gallery. '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 the 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 US 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 'WOMEN' (2015) are taken from an image of a banner carried at 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 rear gallery 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, and 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 NYC. The errant fragments of newspaper both ground the historicity of the banners and disturb it. While the slogans on the banners "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.

For further information, please contact:
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Masks and social distancing required

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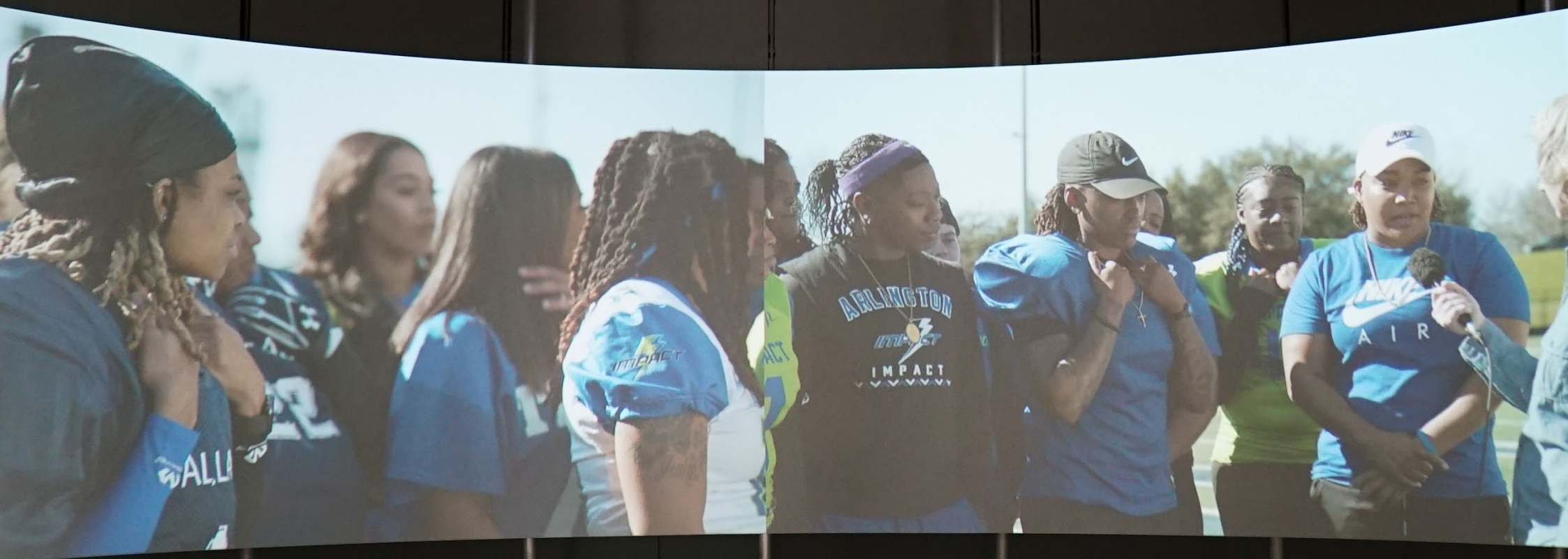
SHARON HAYES

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. Sharon Hayes lives and works in Philadelphia, where she holds the position of Associate Professor of Fine Arts at the University of Pennsylvania.

Sharon Hayes
Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 2019





Sharon Hayes
Installation view, 'Commonwealth'
Institute for Contemporary Art, Virginia. 12 September 2020 – 31 January 2021



Sharon Hayes
Ricerche: two, 2020
2-channel video, 3.2K video, color, sound
38 minutes 47 seconds
Edition of 5 + 2 AP
(HAYES-2021-0109)

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Sharon Hayes
Ricerche: two, 2020
Production still

“If there is a deep scepticism that surfaces most often in my work, it’s the scepticism over individuality (...) If there is anything thematically foundational for me, it’s that scepticism. That most often elaborates itself in an interrogation of the relationship between collective formation and individual formation.

The reason I was interested in ‘Comizi d’Amore’ is because Pasolini is always interviewing people in groups. Although they are speaking individually and it is a single person vocalising, they are shown in a way that you understand the failure of that constitution.”

– Sharon Hayes

In conversation with Julia Bryan-Wilson

‘Sharon Hayes’, Phaidon, 2018



Women's Strike for Equality, New York, 1970
Archive photograph



Sharon Hayes
Installation view, 'A Voice Remains'
Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London. 24 April – 30 May 2015



Sharon Hayes
(W)OM(E)N, 2015
Two silkscreens on paper
Framed dimensions:
138.4×69.2×4.4 cm and 138.5×52×4.5 cm
54½×27¼×1¾ inches and 54½×20½×1¾ in
Edition of 6 + 2 AP
(HAYES-2021-0116)



Sharon Hayes
Installation view, 'Echo'
Moderna Museet, Stockholm. 13 April – 11 August 2019



Sharon Hayes
Installation view, 'NEL MEZZO'
Tanya Leighton, Berlin. 29 June – 24 August 2019



Sharon Hayes
Ricerche: one, 2019
2-channel HD video, colour, sound
28 minutes each
Edition of 5 + 2 AP
(HAYES-2019-0107)

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Sharon Hayes
When Will This End, 2021
Acrylic paint and newsprint (May
2020 – February 2021) on textile
112.1x101.6 cm
44¼x40 in
Unique
(HAYES-2021-0114)





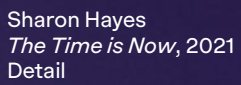
Sharon Hayes
When Will This End, 2021
Detail

Sharon Hayes
What Do We Want, 2021
Acrylic paint and newsprint (May
2020 – February 2021) on textile
101.6x111.8 cm
40x44 in
Unique
(HAYES-2021-0115)



Sharon Hayes
The Time is Now, 2021
Acrylic paint and newsprint (May
2020 – February 2021) on textile
99x99 cm
39x39 in
Unique
(HAYES-2021-0113)





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