



JUNE

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## ***Blood of a Poet***

**Leda Bourgogne and Mira Schor**

curated by Camila McHugh

May 7 - June 26, 2021

open by appointment

*Blood of a Poet* brings together the work of **Mira Schor** (\*1950, New York) and **Leda Bourgogne** (\*1989, Vienna), marking Mira Schor's first exhibition in Germany. Schor's work homes in on the gap between visual and verbal language, driven by the question of what collapsing this chasm might look like or mean. Infused by a feminist and political consciousness, language has figured as a primary subject of Schor's practice over the past five decades. Five single-word canvases from her *Language as Image* series (ongoing since 1990) are on view at June.

Stitched lines segment and structure Leda Bourgogne's paintings: a compositional strategy, but also a concern with the notion of a suture—that is, the closing of a wound. Bourgogne positions the surface of a painting as a kind of skin, forgoing canvas for textiles like gauze, velvet or mesh, which she cuts out and pieces back together. These are materials that could have been worn: draped over a shoulder, hugging a hip bone. Her works are at once delicate and commanding, something like the fragile resilience of the human body. In ***Blaze, 2020***, which extends out from the wall on hefty steel cantilevers, bleached lines fire like neurons across a gauze center band surrounded by oblong, mauve-colored shapes that are patchworked along the transparent, black mesh. These forms echo the eyes stitched in bright yellow sewing thread atop a crest of wings in ***Seraphim, 2020***, which took the many-eyed, fiery Seraphim angels as a starting point.

Both artists are also writers. Schor is widely known for her 1997 collection of essays, *Wet: On Painting, Feminism, and Art Culture* and more recently for her annotations of covers of the New York Times in paint and ink, a project initiated during the term of the 45th president of the United States. Schor's painting practice has always held written language close: the influence of the 1980s heyday of semiotics and its forebearers like Apollinaire and Mallarmé is evident. Schor co-edited the art criticism journal and editorial project M/E/A/N/I/N/G, which was influenced by the notion that language dictates meaning, not vice versa.

The exhibition *Blood of a Poet* borrows its title from Jean Cocteau's avant-garde film "Le Sang D'un Poète" (1930), incidentally a favorite of both artists. Leda Bourgogne's poetry articulates her paintings' emotional grain, as both her visual and written practices reflect on the likes of desire, dreams and spiritual realms. Sentences lifted from some of her poems are scrawled on chewing gum stuck outside the gallery's entrance in ***Gum, 2021***. Her drawings—a practice she began more dedicatedly during the first lockdown last year—form a bridge between the two via the immediacy of finely-rendered colored pencil. ***Who by fire, 2020*** conjures a meditative state as its line drifts from watery forms to biomorphic canals to plumes of smoke.

Mira Schor takes on the body in *Flesh, 2015*, embedding the word with the fleshy materiality of its meaning. She painted *Flesh* repeatedly (a response, in part, to poet Johanna Drucker's 1989 book *The Word Made Flesh*) and continued with other words, like *Thing*. The four *Thing* paintings on view at June — *Thing, 2011; Purple Thing, NY #12, 2014; Thing #8, 2014; Thing, 2017*—attest to the persistence of this project, also underscoring the consistency of Schor's script throughout the series. Counter to the prevalence of technical reproducibility and appropriation in art making at the end of the 20th century, Schor experimented with handmade mechanical reproduction of her own handwriting by copying,

A final thought: Both artists, across two generations and between New York and Berlin, avow a resolutely feminist dimension to their practices. Their strikingly different work and divergent concerns remind us that this stance is neither limiting nor prescriptive, but rather generative and evolving, which the ricochets across their work here might reveal.

**Mira Schor** (\*1950, New York) is a New York-based artist operating in the nexus of language, feminist theory, and painting. Her work has been included in exhibitions at The Jewish Museum, New York; The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; MoMA P.S.1, New York; The Neuberger Museum, Purchase, NY; the Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield; Kunsthaus Graz and Lyles and King, New York. Schor's work is in the permanent collections of Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis; The Marjorie Hessel Collection of Contemporary Art, Annandale-on Hudson; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; Portland Art Museum, Portland; University of Kentucky Art Museum, Lexington and the Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena. Schor is the recipient of numerous awards including the Guggenheim Fellowship in Painting, the Pollock-Krasner Grant, the College Art Association's Frank Jewett Mather Award in Art Criticism, the Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant, and the Women's Caucus for Art Lifetime Achievement Award. She attended the CalArts Feminist Arts Program from 1970-71, participating in the Womanhouse exhibition in 1972, and taught at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, Canada, from 1974 to 1978. She is an Associate Teaching Professor in Fine Arts at Parsons The New School for Design.

**Leda Bourgoigne** (\*1989, Vienna, Austria) is a Berlin-based artist whose practice is informed by strategies of painting as well as an ongoing preoccupation with the body, feminist theory and psychoanalysis. She studied Fine Art at the Städelschule, Frankfurt and German Philology and Film Studies in Frankfurt and Zürich. Selected solo exhibitions include Braunsfelder, Cologne; Jiri Svestka Gallery, Prague; BQ, Berlin and the Kunstverein Braunschweig. Her work has also been included in group exhibitions at the Kunstverein Bielefeld; Berghain, Berlin and Helmhaus Zurich. Her solo exhibition *Minor Assault* is on view through June 19, 2021 at QBBQ, Berlin.