

*Hand to your ear: Part 2 (noise/silence)*  
Curated by Gabriella Nugent  
Cameron Clayborn, Nikita Gale,  
Tarek Lakhri, Ghislaine Leung,  
Kate Spencer Stewart, Sung Tieu

24 February - 24 March 2022

If *Part 1 (presence/surplus)* of *Hand to your ear* examined sound as a strategy of contact, of being seen and heard by others, *Part 2 (noise/silence)* considers its inverse: silence and opacity as in, after Édouard Glissant, the refusal to be knowable, understood and rendered transparent by a dominant Western order. The exhibition turns to silence as a violent experience, as in being silenced, but also as a political position or a strategy of refusal to be seen and heard, or to be intelligible by the power structures that bind subjects. Drawing from Jacques Rancière, *Part 2* considers the inegalitarian social relations that determine who is afforded a voice, or that this speech is understood as discourse and another as noise. Bearing this distinction in mind, the exhibition explores the political imperative to speak up, but also the potential in listening closely to what may otherwise be defined as noise or silence.

Inherent to Ghislaine Leung's practice is the making visible of power relations and structures. The exhibited works – *Gates*, *Flags* and *Kiss Magic Heart* – draw out these concerns in relation to sound. In *Gates* (2019), Leung blocks the gallery's thresholds with baby gates, discouraging an ease of movement that implicates the viewer in the dynamics of entrance and perceived permission by an invisible authority. Moreover, if there is an attempt by the white cube space to sustain the illusion of artworks as autonomous, *Flags* (2019), a work comprised of the interior doors painted in black gloss, emphasises their relational nature: to the gallery, viewer and other objects. These easily overlooked interventions challenge ingrained norms.

Taking its title from three London radio stations, Leung's *Kiss Magic Heart* (2019) applies active noise cancellation to commercial recordings from these stations. Typically used in headphones, active noise cancellation works by creating an enclosed space in which noise is counteracted by playing back its opposite soundwaves. However, in *Kiss Magic Heart*, Leung opens up this closed system. One speaker on the wall struggles to negate the other: the distance between them has been calculated to avoid cutting out the sound entirely. The work produces an incidental abstract sound dependent on the presence and proximity of viewers as well as the architecture of the space. Leung's negative sound composition proposes a strategy of fugitive listening that attends to silenced voices.

The body's presence, or rather its absence, is a central aspect of Cameron Clayborn's practice. His *roompiercer (with tool)* (2022) calls to mind a tongue pierced by a sharp metal pick. Part of an ongoing series of sculptures, the work gauges the environment and the body's ability to enter a space, whether emotionally or physically. *Roompiercer (with tool)* evokes an experience of silencing and the way in which one's autonomous being is connected to larger power structures. Made with a sewing machine and brown-dyed muslin cloth, Clayborn's *segment from a longer line* (2022) presents an isolated disembodied sack. The sand-filled pouch is sealed at the top with a zip, conveying both a violent act of enclosure as well as the generative creation of one's own space. The work suggests a refusal to participate in a hostile world.

Nikita Gale's *RUINERS* series similarly propose a kind of refusal, specifically with regards to performance. They challenge the current preoccupation with the figuration and representation of traditionally silenced voices. The series is comprised of the vernacular architecture of public venues, namely the metal banisters that guide bodies up stairways and ramps, through admission lines and ultimately to the performer on stage. However, in *RUINER X* (2021), Gale withdraws the subject of performance, leaving only the infrastructure of a profession that demands the limelight. The artist wraps a metal banister in terry-cloth towels, a material often used to silence and dampen unwanted noise or vibrations. Gale's ephemeral gesture of silencing is made permanent through the towel's absorption of concrete.

Sung Tieu's *Cella S1001* (2022) makes visible a lesser-known aspect of German history: the recruitment agreement between the GDR and Vietnam. In 1980, the GDR signed a recruitment agreement with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to counteract the country's labour shortage. Thousands of young Vietnamese people arrived in East Germany in the following years. They toiled in factories and lived in accommodation isolated from the wider German population. For *Cella S1001*, Tieu sourced a typewriter produced by Vietnamese workers for the state-owned enterprise, VEB Robotron Dresden. A document detailing the average number of Vietnamese labourers in German cities is inserted into the typewriter, which is displayed alongside the standardised contract signed by these workers. The artist's choice of object challenges the silencing of Vietnamese workers through a device often used to record and disseminate collective histories.

Against this background of silence and silencing, Tarek Lakhrissi's *Perfume of Traitors II* (2022) explores the betrayal of language. The work is comprised of several blades; some are 'close to the knives', a reference to David Wojnarowicz's book *Close to the Knives: A Memoir of Disintegration* (1991), while others are monstrous in shape. The blades are threats to be wielded but are simultaneously rendered useless due to their blunt edges. A source for Lakhrissi is Monique Wittig's novel *Les Guérillères* (1969), a story about a group of warrior women who want to form an insurrection against men. The goal of these women is a new order and a new language to reflect and promote the new values, as the older language perpetuated the old order. Lakhrissi's work is vested in this search for a new language as a kind of impossibility, one that is always laden by the past – a conundrum captured in blades that are more like jewellery than weapons.

In her paintings, Kate Spencer Stewart is similarly interested in language, specifically a resistance to language as conveyed through abstraction. *Odeon* (2021) and *Well* (2021) are created through the tedious layering of brushstrokes in a variety of darkened shades. Stewart's canvases consequently vary in their evocations, from an evening sky and the flutter of feathers to the depths of a well. In their exploration of the visual, Stewart's paintings are without a linguistic or literary source, but at the same time generate an elaborate language game through the viewer's attempt to narrate them, suggesting an impossibility of escape.

– Gabriella Nugent

## CAMERON CLAYBORN

Cameron Clayborn (b. 1992 in Pine Bluff, AR, US) lives and works in New Haven. He received his BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2016 and MFA from Yale School of Art in 2021. Clayborn's solo exhibitions include Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, DE (2022) and Simone Subal Gallery, NY, US (2019). Selected group exhibitions include Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Stuttgart, DE (2021); White Columns, NY, US (2019); Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, US (2018); and Zhou B Art Center, Chicago, US (2018).

## NIKITA GALE

Nikita Gale (b. 1983 Anchorage, AK, US) lives and works in Los Angeles. Gale holds a BA in Anthropology with an emphasis in Archaeological Studies from Yale University, earned an MFA in New Genres at UCLA and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Gale's recent solo exhibitions have been held at 52 Walker, NY, US (2022); California African American Museum, LA, US (2021); Anchorage Museum, Anchorage, US (2021); MoMA PS1, NY, US (2020); Reyes|Finn, Detroit, US (2019); and Commonwealth and Council, LA, US (2018). Gale's work has been included in group exhibitions at Swiss Institute, NY, US (2022); Kunstraum Kreuzberg, Berlin, DE (2021); Nottingham Contemporary, UK (2020); LACE, LA, US (2020); Moderna Museet, Stockholm, SE (2019); Hammer Museum, LA, US (2018); and The Studio Museum in Harlem, NY, US (2017). Gale's first European institutional solo exhibition will take place at London's Chisenhale Gallery this year.

## TAREK LAKHRISSE

Tarek Lakhrissi (b. 1992, Châtelleraut, FR) is based in Paris and Brussels. Lakhrissi holds a BA in Literature and Theatre from Paris III Sorbonne-Nouvelle and an MA in History of Art and Theatre from the University of Montreal. Solo exhibitions have been held at Kunstverein Kevin Space, Vienna, AT (2021); MOSTYN, Wales, UK (2021); Vitrine, London, UK (2021); and Palazzo Re Rebaudengo, Guarene, IT (2020). Recent group exhibitions include Kunsthal Charlottenborg, DK (2021); Biennale of Sydney, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, AU (2020); Wiels, Brussels, BE (2020); Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR (2020); Hayward Gallery, London, UK (2019); and CAC, Vilnius, LT (2017). His works will be included in upcoming exhibitions at Haus der Kunst, Munich, DE (2022); La Verrière Hermès Foundation, Brussels, BE (2022); and the Prague Biennale, CZ (2022).

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#### GHISLAINE LEUNG

Ghislaine Leung (b. 1980, Stockholm, SE) lives and works in London. Leung holds an MA in Aesthetics and Art Theory from the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, London. Recent solo exhibitions have been held at Ordet, Milan, IT (2021); ESSEX STREET, New York, US (2019); Chisenhale Gallery, London, UK (2019); Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, Stuttgart, DE (2019); Cell Project Space, London, UK (2017); and WIELS, Brussels, BE (2016). Recent group exhibitions include Kunsthalle Fribourg, Fribourg, CH (2018); Schleuse, Vienna, AT (2018); Bureau des Réalités, Brussels, BE (2018); Studio Voltaire, London, UK (2016); Stedelijk, Amsterdam, NL (2015); and Serpentine Galleries, London, UK (2015).

#### KATE SPENCER STEWART

Kate Spencer Stewart (b. 1984 Phoenix, AZ, US) lives and works in Los Angeles. She received a BFA from Otis College of Art and Design, an MFA from UCLA, and attended the Mountain School of the Arts, LA. Recent solo exhibitions include La Maison de Rendez-Vous, Brussels, BE (2022); Park View/Paul Soto, LA, US (2020); The Gallery @ Le Hangar Restaurant, Paris, FR (2019); and The Gallery @ Michael's Restaurant, Santa Monica, US (2018). Group exhibitions include Bureau, NY, US (2021); Neuer Kunstverein Wien, Vienna, AT (2021); Andrew Kreps Gallery, NY, US (2021); and Piktogram Gallery, Warsaw, PL (2019).

#### SUNG TIEU

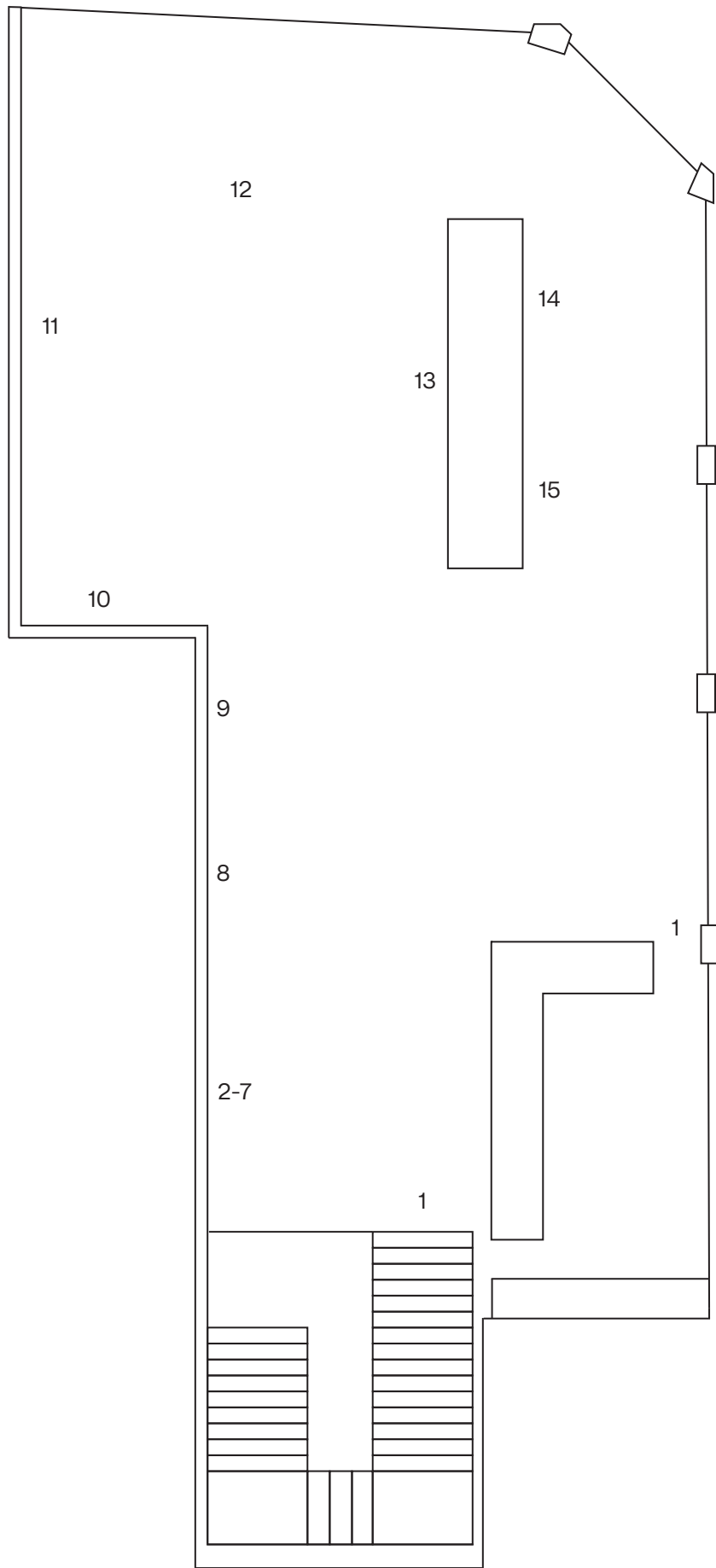
Sung Tieu (b. 1987, Hai Duong, VN) lives and works in Berlin. She graduated with a BFA from the University of Fine Arts Hamburg in 2013 and completed the Postgraduate Programme at the Royal Academy of Arts, London in 2018. Solo exhibitions have been held at Kunstmuseum Bonn, DE (2021); Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig, DE (2021); Emalin, London, UK (2020); Nottingham Contemporary, UK (2020); and Haus der Kunst, Munich, DE (2020). Tieu's work has been included in group exhibitions at Taipei Fine Arts Museum, TW (2021); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, NL (2021); Hamburger Bahnhof Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, DE (2021); 34th Bienal de São Paulo, BR (2021); and 1st Matter of Art Biennale, Prague, CZ (2020). Upcoming solo exhibitions in 2022 will be held at Kunstverein Gartenhaus, Vienna, AT and Mudam, Luxembourg, LU.

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## LIST OF WORKS

1. Ghislaine Leung  
*Gates*, 2019  
child safety gates  
dimensions variable
2. Tarek Lakhrissi  
*BETRAYING TRUST*, 2022  
stainless steel  
40 × 5 cm  
15¾ × 2 inches
3. Tarek Lakhrissi  
*BETRAYING FIRE*, 2022  
stainless steel  
27 × 20 cm  
10⅝ × 7⅞ inches
4. Tarek Lakhrissi  
*BETRAYING GUTS*, 2022  
stainless steel  
38 × 5.5 cm  
15 × 2⅛ inches
5. Tarek Lakhrissi  
*BETRAYING HERITAGE*, 2022  
stainless steel  
39 × 12 cm  
15⅜ × 4¾ inches
6. Tarek Lakhrissi  
*BETRAYING HIM*, 2022  
stainless steel  
31 × 4.5 cm  
12¼ × 1¾ inches
7. Tarek Lakhrissi  
*BETRAYING STARS*, 2022  
stainless steel  
21 × 30 cm  
8¼ × 11¾ inches
8. Ghislaine Leung  
*Flags*, 2019  
gloss black paint  
dimensions variable
9. Cameron Clayborn  
*roompiercer (with tool)*, 2021  
aluminium, steel  
7.6 × 5.1 × 10.2 cm  
3 × 2 × 4 inches
10. Sung Tieu  
*Cella S1001*, 2022  
typewriter from VEB Robotron Dresden, with  
framed Work Contract, stamp on digital print  
8 × 31 × 32.5 cm; 3⅛ × 12¼ × 12¾ inches  
Work Contract, in three parts, each:  
32.1 × 23.4 cm; 12¼ × 9¼ inches
11. Nikita Gale  
*RUINER X*, 2021  
aluminium, concrete, terry cloth  
156.2 × 96.5 × 90.2 cm  
61½ × 38 × 35½ inches
12. Cameron Clayborn  
*segment from a longer line*, 2022  
dyed muslin, insulation, Poly-fil, sand, zipper  
151.1 × 55.9 × 40.6 cm  
59½ × 22 × 16 inches
13. Ghislaine Leung  
*Kiss Magic Heart*, 2019  
dimensions variable  
duration: 1:00:00 min, looped
14. Kate Spencer Stewart  
*Odeon*, 2021  
oil on canvas  
167.6 × 167.6 cm  
66 × 66 inches
15. Kate Spencer Stewart  
*Well*, 2021  
oil on canvas  
43.2 × 43.2 cm  
17⅛ × 17⅛ in



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