

Ramaya Teegne

Regrouping

March 30 – May 12, 2019

With *Regrouping*, Ramaya Teegne continues her inquiry into the dominant mechanisms of art by observing its economy, circulation, historicization as well as the power relations by which the field of art is constituted and sustained. For her solo exhibition at Kevin Space, Teegne sources from a range of art history and film, thereby shifting her focus onto the practices of activist artists and collectives. The exhibition borrows its title from Lizzie Borden's eponymous essay film from 1976 which explores the intimacy and dynamics of a small group of four women artists as well as broader groups engaged in "consciousness-raising" — a form of activism popularized by American feminists in the late 1960s.

Materials/Bechdel's is an edition of 500 plastic bags republishing Alison Bechdel's seminal comic, which marks the birth of the well-known "Bechdel Test" evaluating gender bias in film. Reminiscent of Group Material's *Shopping Bag*, the bags are distributed by the shops and market stalls on Volkertplatz, thus expanding the exhibition into the space's surroundings, and used as a means for observing the interactions and frictions generated.

Based on an exhibition by the artist collective Art Club 2000, the sleek office environment of the work *AC2Ks* lies at the heart of the exhibition. AC2K, a group of Cooper Union graduates brought together by art dealer Colin De Land, was invited to Geneva in 1995 and presented the exhibition *Working!* at Forde, an art space Teegne co-directed from 2014 to 2016. At Kevin Space, *AC2Ks* borrows elements from the original installation: surrounded by the black and white photographs of the bread-and-butter workplaces of, this time, Kevin Space's co-directors and the artists, a desk, office chairs and a coffee machine invite the visitors to sojourn in the space.

While conceived as a site for discussions and gatherings, the exhibition raises issues of labor and the mechanisms through which the artistic milieu is structurally administered, controlled and maintained. To this end, Teegne invited the collective *Nous Professionnelxs* (Us, the professionals) to take over Kevin Space's Instagram account. Facilitating a moment of collective support to artists or cultural workers who have experienced various forms of discrimination, *Nous Professionnelxs* provides examples of correspondences related to professional relationships shared anonymously by art workers. During the course of the exhibition, the initiative republishes, this time, recent and historical letters exposing power dynamics at play within the art communities.

In *Genzkens*, five replicas of the prominent Nefertiti bust (displayed at the Neues Museum Berlin), are placed with sunglasses on the window seat, their gaze directed outward and seeming to seek interaction with the passersby on the street. Referencing Isa Genzken's *Nofretete* series (2012-18), Teegne interrogates the circulation and possession of art objects as well the power relations at play. While standing in for the lineage of feminine beauty embedded in the canon of art history, Nefertiti, however, constitutes as well a figure of empowerment for Black women around the world. Intended as a means to complicate the conversation around appropriation and representation within the art context, Teegne questions what it means when Genzken or herself decide to co-opt, distort, and reimagine this image.

Shifting away from a singular subject, Teegne moves towards the question of how to find common grounds within the art context and introduces recurring questions of agency and representation, collaboration and solidarity, authorship and singularity. Brought together and put into dialogue, *Regrouping* interrogates how collaborative work may be exhibited in the art context. By quoting and creating reference spaces, Teegne's works enquire art historical, economic and political contexts by reasserting the value of collective work and conversation as a means to object the structural bias of established narratives and the current model of our societies.

Ramaya Tegegne (Switzerland) has presented solo exhibitions at VIS, Hamburg (2018), Park View / Paul Soto, Brussels (2018), Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zurich (2018), First Continent, Baltimore (2017), Fri Art Kunsthalle Fribourg (2015), and Marbriers 4, Geneva (2014). Her performances have been presented at Kunsthalle Basel (2018), Kunsthalle Bern (2017) and the Swiss Institute, New York (2016) amongst others. She is co-founder of the bookshop La Dispersion in Geneva. In 2017, she launched the campaign Wages For Wages Against, for the remuneration of artists in Switzerland and beyond.

During the runtime of the exhibition, Tegegne will activate the exhibition space by hosting a public discussion tackling issues of labor, defense mechanisms and collectivity within the art field:

On Defense

Tuesday April 9th, 6:30 pm

Presentation and discussion with Ramaya Tegegne in the context of the campaign Wages For Wages Against (wfa.ch) for the remuneration of artists.

LIST OF WORKS

Kevin Space's Business Hours, 2019

Business hours sign

AC2Ks (Fanny), 2019

AC2Ks (Carolina), 2019

AC2Ks (Ramaya), 2019

AC2Ks (Franziska), 2019

AC2Ks (Denise), 2019

Inkjet prints, wooden frames

AC2Ks, 2019

Table, office chairs, coffee machine

Genzkens, 2019

Nefertiti bust replicas, sunglasses

Materials/Bechdels, 2019

Printed plastic bags

Edition of 500 distributed by the shops on Volkertplatz at Feinkost Türk. u. Österr. Spezialitäten, Hima Mobile, Play Box, Rami Offenes Keramik Studio, Schwan Apotheke, Tabak Trafik

Instagram takeover by Nous Professionnellxs during the time of the exhibition.

Follow @kevinspacevienna & @nous.professionnellxs

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