

Between Bridges  
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## THESES ON HOPE

#5 fierce pussy: \*

10 September–22 October 2022

Between Bridges is ecstatic to present the first solo exhibition in Europe by the artist/activist collective fierce pussy. The exhibition underlines the collective's long-standing and transformative interventions in the public realm, as well as their expansive investigation of the relationship between language, agency and community.

Formed in New York in 1991 by a group of queer women artists/AIDS activists, fierce pussy emerged in a climate of homophobia and violent discrimination, one that saw the erasure of queer culture and spaces as well as the devastation wrought by the AIDS epidemic. Driven by the desire to defy lesbian invisibility, claim space, and collectively create means of representation and belonging, fierce pussy made work addressed to their own lesbian and queer communities while also directly naming and challenging homophobic and misogynist government officials and public figures. Employing the aesthetics and politics of immediacy, their output was characterized by 'any-means-necessary' low-tech, low-budget production, replication and distribution. Initially formed of a fluid group of lesbian artists/activists, four of its original core members continue to collaborate—Nancy Brooks Brody, Joy Episalla, Zoe Leonard and Carrie Yamaoka. Their work continues to align itself with the lineage of radical queer-feminist practice to—among other things—decisively and joyfully subvert the patriarchal regime.

The exhibition centres around the collective's early campaigns, dissecting the politics of naming and being named, and exploring the potentialities inherent in reframing language. Over the years, their continuous remixes and adaptations incorporated the developments of queer visibility, terminology, and community. The show emphasizes fierce pussy's earliest and primary techniques—xerography and wheat pasting—as well as the critical role these played within the queer rights movement's public presence. Installed in different arrangements and sizes, the show offers an array of 15 multiples from the past three decades, all of which are taken from the *List Posters* and the *Family Pictures and Found Photos* series, initiated in the 1990s.

The *List Posters* series brings together historical and contemporary terms for lesbians and queers. Often employed pejoratively at the outset, in time, and with successive liberation movements, the terms have been appropriated by many as part of a reclaiming, emancipatory vocabulary. Consistently preceded by "I AM A"—affirmatively naming themselves and providing a space for others to do the same, while embracing multiplicities and coexistences—the original 1991 posters are concluded with "AND PROUD". The closing line has changed since the campaign's remixing for a 2008 retrospective at New York's Printed Matter, where the collective wheat-pasted posters across the not-for-profit organisation's storefront window and introduced the new ending: "AND SO ARE YOU".

Referencing that 2008 presentation, fierce pussy has conceived a site-specific installation for Between Bridges' front window, which mixes wheat-pasted multiples of the latest English *List* remix with a newly commissioned German version, put together with support and input from fierce pussy's German-speaking peers. Inside the exhibition space, and alongside their arrangement on differently sized crate stacks, the *List Posters* are joined by a range of multiples from the *Family Pictures and Found Photos* stacks series. In the latter, various slang words are mixed with images of the collective's own members as babies or children; elsewhere, they employ suggestive text alongside images featuring unknown people in pairs and groups. The work attests to the at once harmful and emancipatory qualities of language as a tool that can both transform the present and offer hopeful glimpses of a possible future.

Please feel free to take, replicate, and disseminate the posters.

fierce pussy and Between Bridges would like to thank Pauline Boudry, Henrike Hannemann, Ina Hielscher, Andrea Geyer, Susanne Huber, Renate Lorenz, Barbara Schroeder and virgil b/g taylor for their invaluable translation advice and support.

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Works on display:

Window fronts

English and German *List Posters*

2018–2022

black and white photocopies, wheat-pasted to glass storefront windows

251 x 801 cm

Exhibition space

15 stacked posters from the series *List Posters* and *Family Pictures und Found Photos*

1991–2022

black and white photocopies, stacking crates

posters: 42 x 29,7 cm or 29,7 x 42 cm each, installation on crates: dimensions variable

*Lover of women*

1992/2022

inkjet print on bond paper wheat-pasted to gallery wall

250 x 386 cm