

Off Script

curated by Jeanette Bisschops

with works by Art & Language, Joel Dean, Paige K.B., Anna K.E.,
Christine Sun Kim, Kang Seung Lee, and Sue Tompkins

June 2 – July 7, 2023

Off Script brings together a group of artists whose works offer propositions to liberate signs, symbols and words from the conventions of traditional language and text. Including works by Art & Language, Joel Dean, Paige K.B., Anna K.E., Christine Sun Kim, Kang Seung Lee, and Sue Tompkins, *Off Script* revels in open-ended storytelling, uncovering new forms for vocabulary and dialogue. Destabilizing a fundamental linguistic hierarchy, the works break out of the constraints of straightforward meaning and interpretation and deflate ideas of truth and authorship.

Celebrating the messiness and sensuousness of communication, questioning the authoritarian effect of printed text, and exploring the opaque quality of unfamiliar or forgotten signs, the works in this exhibition tell tales that abandon and adhere to different carriers, spill in new structures and forms, and activate the bodily functions of communication. Where does language originate and leave our body? How does it find its receivers and where does it fail? Has the digital age abstracted our interactions by the use of complexity-reducing interfaces and scripts? Making use of linguistic and symbolic layering, blurring, and repetition, the works in this exhibition show how the use of ambiguity could expose the indefinite quality language inherently carries. Asking questions that do not need to be answered, these works deliberately extend a line of escape to a language that refuses to be easily processed and predicted.

– Jeanette Bisschops

Art & Language's earliest works date from before 1968, when the name was first adopted as the name of an artistic practice. In the following year, the first issue of the journal *Art-Language* was published in England. Then and over the next few years Art & Language provided a common identity for a number of people already involved in various types of collaboration. The mid 1960s had seen widespread collapse in the authority of those individualistic cultural protocols which go under the name of Modernism, and the coming together of the two terms 'Art' and 'Language' served to recognise a range of intellectual concerns and artistic expedients which that collapse had occasioned. For a variety of activities which bore practically and critically upon the concept of art, but which were at home neither in the studio nor in the gallery, Art & Language promised a social base in shared conversation. That conversation in turn transformed the practice of those involved and generated other kinds of work. Major solo exhibitions include 'Figure it out who can', Galerie Michael Janssen, Berlin, Germany (2019); 'Nobody Spoke', Kunstsaale, Berlin, Germany (2017); Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), Barcelona, Spain (2014); Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium (2013); Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich, Switzerland (2012); Espoo Museum of Modern Art, Espoo, Finland (2009); Centro De Arte Contemporáneo (CAC) Málaga, Spain (2004); MoMA PS1, New York, USA (1999); ICA, London, UK (1991); Tate Gallery, London, UK (1985); Musée d'Art Moderne, Toulon, France (1982) and Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, UK (1974). Art & Language have participated in numerous group exhibitions, including 'Guernica' at the National Picasso Museum in Paris, France (2017); 'Conceptual Art in Britain: 1964-1979', Tate Britain, London, UK (2016); 'Before Normal: Concept After Concept', Museet for Samtidskunst, Roskilde, Denmark (2014); 'Invisible: Art about the Unseen 1957–2012', Hayward Gallery, London, UK (2012); 'Sound of Music', Turner Contemporary, Margate, Kent, UK (2009); dOCUMENTA 10, Kassel, Germany (1997), dOCUMENTA 7, Kassel, Germany (1982), the Xème Biennale Internationale d'Art, Palais de L'Europe, Menton, France (1974). In 1986 they were nominated for the Turner Prize.

Joel Dean (b. 1986, Atlanta, GA) lives and works in New York. Joel Dean's practice spans painting, sculpture, and installation, examining across these formats the stability of cultural signs and symbols. In large scale oil on canvas, Dean uses alphabetical characters as a point of departure for intricate, fantastical panoramas. Beginning with initials as a familiar strategy of signification, Dean densely populates these archetypal origins with personal symbology and serpentine narratives, eluding a unilateral reading. In Dean's sculpture and installations, the denotations of visual icons are similarly complicated and challenged to engender more complex interpretation: "Big Apples" are choked with overgrowth; city skylines comprise stacks of currency; porcelain angels are perched atop glowing fluorescent lighting. In undermining the simplicity of the symbols he employs, Dean ultimately expands their meaning.

Paige K. B. (b. 1988, Los Angeles) is an artist, writer, and editor based in New York. She studied at the California Institute of the Arts, the National College of Art & Design in Dublin, Ireland, and the Rhode Island School of Design where she received a BFA in Printmaking with honors. She has most recently staged a solo show at Blade Study in New York, in addition to two other solo exhibitions and six group ones, all in New York, since the beginning of last year. Her writing has been published regularly across numerous publications and online platforms for the past decade, including in Artforum—where she was formerly an Associate Editor—as well as in Frieze, Viscose, Topical Cream, GARAGE, and Spike, among others. She is the author of the monograph *Suellen Rocca: In Dreams, The Last Works* (Matthew Marks, 2022), which is catalogued and held in the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) Library in New York. Forthcoming publications include a new essay for a Swiss Institute catalogue as well as the long-form article *Drive It All Over Me*, which surveys text-based artworks by Jay Chung and Q Takeki Maeda, Vanessa Place, and Jack Goldstein. The latter will be co-published this year in French by the FRAC Lorraine (France) and mfc-michèle didier (France/Belgium) as well as in an English edition by SIG-Verlag (Germany).

Anna K.E. was born in 1986 in Tbilisi, Georgia. Selected solo shows include: National Georgian Museum, Tbilisi, Georgia (2022); Gallery Artbeat, Tbilisi, Georgia (2022); Simone Subal Gallery, New York, USA (2013, 2015, 2018, 2020, 2021); Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin, Germany (2013, 2015, 2020); The Delaware Contemporary, Wilmington, DE (2020); *REARMIRRORVIEW, Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation...*, curated by Margot Norton, Georgian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2019); Kunstpalais Erlangen, Germany (2019); Queens Museum, New York, USA (2017-2018); Primary, Nottingham, UK (2017); Sommer Gallery, Tel Aviv (2016). Selected group shows: E.A Shared Space, Tbilisi, Georgia (2022); Oxygen Biennial, Tbilisi, Georgia (2021); Hardspace, Basel, Switzerland (2019); September Gallery, Hudson, New York (2018); Galeria Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brazil (2018); Galerie Gisela Clement, Bonn, Germany (2018); Zentrum für Kunst und Medien, Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe, Germany (2017); G2 Kunsthalle, Leipzig, Germany (2016); The Kitchen, New York, NY (2015). In 2012 Hatje Cantz published Anna K.E.'s first monograph entitled *A well-to-do man is cruising in his fancy car when a small hen runs out on the road in front*. Anna K.E. represented Georgia in the 2019 Venice Biennale. Her work is part of the following public collections: Stadtparkasse Düsseldorf im Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, Germany; Muzeum Współczesne Wrocław, Poland; Cologne Staatskanzlei NRW, Cologne, Germany; Vanhaerents Art Collection, Brussels, Belgium.

Christine Sun Kim is an American artist based in Berlin. Kim's practice considers how sound operates in society, deconstructing the politics of sound and exploring how oral languages operate as social currency. Musical notation, written language, infographics, American Sign Language (ASL), the use of the body, and strategically deployed humor are all recurring elements in her practice. Working across drawing, performance, video and large scale murals, Kim explores her relationship to spoken and signed languages, to her built and social environments, and to the world at large. Kim has exhibited and performed internationally, including at the Gwangju Biennale (2023); Secession, Vienna (2023); Queens Museum, New York (2022); the Drawing Center, New York (2022); the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2021); Manchester International Festival, Manchester (2021); MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge (2020); Whitney Biennial, New York (2019); Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Buffalo (2019); Art Institute of Chicago (2018), among numerous others. Kim's awards and fellowships include an MIT Media Lab Fellowship, a United States Artists fellowship, a Ford and Mellon Foundations' Disabilities Future Fellowship, and the Prix International d'Art Contemporain of the Fondation Prince Pierre de Monaco. Her works are held in numerous prominent collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, LACMA, Tate Britain, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among others.

Kang Seung Lee is a multidisciplinary artist who was born in South Korea and now lives and works in Los Angeles and Seoul. His work frequently engages the legacy of transnational queer histories, particularly as they intersect with art history. Lee has had solo exhibitions and projects at Vincent Price Art Museum, Los Angeles (2023), Gallery Hyundai, Seoul (2021); Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles (2021, 2017, 2016); 18th Street Arts Center, Santa Monica, CA (2020); One and J. Gallery, Seoul, South Korea (2018); Artpace, San Antonio (2017); Los Angeles Contemporary Archive (2016); and Pitzer College Art Galleries, Claremont (2015). Selected group exhibitions have been held at Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (forthcoming 2023); de Appel, Amsterdam (2023); Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles (2023); documenta 15 (invited by Jatiwangi Art Factory), Kassel (2022); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2022); New Museum Triennial, New York (2021); 13th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju (2021); MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA (2021); Asia Cultural Center, Gwangju (2020); National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul (2020); Daelim Museum, Seoul (2020); Palm Springs Art Museum, CA (2019); Participant Inc, New York (2019); LA><ART, Los Angeles (2017); and Centro Cultural Metropolitano, Quito, Ecuador (2016). Lee's work is in the collections of Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; The National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea; The Getty, Los Angeles; RISD Museum, Providence; among others.

Sue Tompkins (b. 1971, Leighton Buzzard) lives and works in Glasgow. Working with fragments of language gathered from everyday encounters and experiences, Tompkins' practice incorporates text, sound, installation, painting and performance. Tompkins graduated from the Glasgow School of Art in 1994 and has been involved in exhibitions and performances worldwide including solo exhibitions at Halle für Kunst, Lüneburg; Lydgalleriet, Bergen; Tenderbooks, London; The Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow at Glasgow International; The Modern Institute, Glasgow; Inverleith House, Edinburgh; Spike Island, Bristol; and Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis. She has presented performances and been included in numerous group exhibitions including those at: Sonar2018, Barcelona; Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt; Tate Britain, London; mumok, Vienna; Tramway, Glasgow; BBC Scotland, Glasgow, White Columns, New York; Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis; Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge; the 29th São Paulo Biennale, São Paulo; the British Art Show 7 at the Hayward Gallery, London and touring; MACBA, Barcelona; ICA and the Tate Modern, London; and Artists Space, New York. Tompkins was shortlisted for the Beck's Futures Prize in 2006 and received the Paul Hamlyn Award in 2011.