

Press Release

Nora Turato

it's not true!!! stop lying!

February 28–April 27, 2024

Public Reception: February 27, 5–8pm

Performance: February 27, 6:30pm

Sprüth Magers, Los Angeles

Nora Turato's medium is language. In a practice that spans performance, video, wall-mounted works and artist books, she examines the ephemeral nature of words and the instability of meaning. Using text as her artistic source material, Turato records and dissects the vernacular of our current visual culture and zeitgeist by collating appropriated words, fragments, and quotes and translating them into captivating incantations that harness the essence and the nonsense of what collectively moves us.

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Sprüth Magers is pleased to present *it's not true!!! stop lying!*, Turato's first solo show with the Los Angeles gallery. The exhibition extends across both gallery floors and showcases *pool 6*, the artist's latest body of work that comprises a performance and the premiere of a video work alongside new enamel panels and site-specific wall paintings. Anchoring the works and released on the occasion of the show is Turato's sixth *pool* publication – the current installment of anthologies of colloquial speech and found text she compiles from a myriad of sources. Picking up the thread of her commission for the 2023 Performa Biennial as well as her 2023 presentation at Sprüth Magers, Berlin, Turato investigates and interprets the mechanisms of the anxiety-driven culture of self-optimization.

"I NEED SOME HEALING," declares one of Turato's multipart vitreous enamel works in bold red lettering, while another line states, "this isn't me," addressing two looming questions of our hyper-capitalist digital age: How can I feel better? And what does authenticity mean? Each of the deftly designed, large-scale panels in the downstairs gallery, glossy and intensely colored, features an all-caps text that functions as an emphasized headline, along with a lowercase sentence above or below it. With its play between graphic and spatial hierarchy, *this isn't me / i need some healing* (2024) presents a reversible reading order and suggests varying or contradictory inner voices split, perhaps, by a barrage of external influences. The slab serif typeface employed throughout all works on view was produced by Turato, in collaboration with Sam de Groot and Kia Tasbihgou, to reflect the tone of *pool 6*.

Installed nearby, *i'm going clear / total organization is necessary!* (2024) refers to disparate areas of culture: It calls to mind the jargon of new religious movements centered on overcoming past trauma and living to one's full potential, as well as the thoughts of Robert De Niro's character, the disconnected, traumatized Taxi Driver (1976) whose existential angst descends into violent paranoia in a film released during the golden age of self-help. As with all of Turato's works, these allusions function as psychological and cultural Rorschach tests that gauge viewers' projections and frames of reference while establishing fresh interconnections. Echoing old-fashioned

advertising signs, the enamel panels are produced in a lengthy process with several rounds of firing. The works' inherent tension is produced between content and medium: Turato channels what is in the ether into uncanny poems on impermanence and inscribes them onto unfading, durable surfaces.

A group of wall paintings, whose near-digital precision is achieved by hand, draw the viewer further into the prevalent themes of *pool 6*. In a loosely H-shaped arrangement, three murals each spell out a word in white letters on a black background. In *authenticity haha* (2024), "haha" is splashed across the space's central wall and paired with "authenticity" to its right. Together, they serve as commentary on our tendency to laugh off discomfiting topics, as well as an acknowledgment of mythologized and manufactured authenticity. The dark-painted wall *speaking my TRUTH!!!* (2024) borrows a viral phrase that suggests the notion of self-empowerment. Under the guise of becoming an "authentic" person, the expression mutates into a strong sense of subjective entitlement. Completing the ensemble, *become pointless* (2024), which is rendered in blue, red and black, hints at resistance to the commercialization of individuality.

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For her performance, Turato metamorphoses into a medium for several different personalities. Through intense training with a voice and dialect coach and delving deeper into the language of the body, the artist has increased her vocal range and her ability to fully embody the characters she portrays. Utilizing the parlance associated with personal transformation, Turato's script holds a magnifying glass to the paradox of practices that are aimed at deflating the ego but instead encourage individualism and self-aggrandizing. Self-care, a term once used by the Black Panthers to describe community connection and the efforts to care for the marginalized and mistreated, has ironically been skewed to function as a way to comfort and adjust the self within a neoliberal society. Turned into a commodified cure, the gospel of self-improvement is used to justify anything; the ego – the overwhelming center of attention – needs products, apps, retreats and workshops to succeed. And so one of Turato's skillfully honed personas asks, "What has prevented you from crushing it?" To which the implied answer is, of course, "you."

In the upstairs gallery, a video work continues to explore the relationship between language and its underlying ideology. Based on the performance, a choreography of words unfolds on a wall-sized screen and turns each term into an image, which is stylistically accompanied by Turato's voice, rhythm and emphasis. Offering offbeat insights into the public psyche, *pool 6* raises questions around self-betterment and self-governing, success and competition, the monetization of life and reality, and pseudoscience marketing. Turato's visual and textual interplay forms a fascinating thesis on our times.

Nora Turato (*1991, Zagreb) lives and works in Amsterdam. She will headline Art On The Mart's program with a commissioned work in spring 2024, on view concurrently with a performance at the Art Institute Chicago. Her performance *Cue The Sun* was commissioned by Performa and premiered during the Performa Biennial 2023 in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include Museum of Modern Art, New York (2022), Secession, Vienna (2021), Centre Pompidou, Paris, MGLC: International Centre of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana, and Sammlung Philara, Düsseldorf (all 2020), Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto (2019), Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein (2019), and Beursschouwburg, Brussels (2019).

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