

Lulu is proud to present the first collaborative exhibition between Allison Katz and Camilla Wills.

For this occasion, Lulu has expanded beyond its usual confines to include a new room in the apartment, in which the artists have created a large-scale wall painting out of pigment with a cactus base, based on a traditional Mexican method. The original gallery space of Lulu features a series of lost dog posters (*perra perdida*) and a new video.

Combining their inimitable approaches toward painting, printing and image-making, the artists explore the idea of the lost dog as a symbol of deferral of content, in which depiction (say of the absent pet on a poster) functions as an index of estrangement and disappearance. As such, the missing animal can be read as a kind of analogue or even metaphor for art making (the impetus behind it). “The dog is always, already, lost.” Given the exuberance with which the artists approach the subject, the loss at the center of it is perhaps less a source of trauma than of jubilation.

The posters take as their starting point a found “*chienne perdue*” announcement, which Katz picked up in Quebec during the summer of 2011. Parodying the codes of information, the telephone number of the frantic owner is replaced with that of the curator. Katz and Wills take further liberties with the function of a poster: advertising the show becomes the show itself, another deferral, as a variety of information (title, names, venue, dates, city, contact information) circulates throughout the series of announcements, none of which take precedence as the official version.

The video in the same room as the posters, “Leash Seeks Lost Bitch (*Perraquitas*)” takes its title from a line in Gabriela Jauregui’s text written for the exhibition; the misspelling of *perroquet* in brackets aligns the video’s subjects with the mimicry associated with parrots. Using themes from D. H. Lawrence’s “Mornings in Mexico,” the grouping of human, dog and parrot forms an intricate pattern of naming, call and response, original and copy. Jauregui’s inverted title allows for a reconsideration of our devices and agency in relation to another species; as well as in art-making. Imitation, built up with colour and extra texture, and slowly panned across in the video, signals the functionless surplus at the core of desire; directly at odds with that other generative impulse announced by the posters, that is, loss. The video is deliberately silent, as the motif of calling out is not meant to be answered directly. Instead the exhibition produces a series of visual subterfuges, that link two rooms, on opposite sides of the apartment, together.

Down the hall, the action of the wall mural is a repetition and rearrangement of the posters. Redacted and abbreviated, they are a shorthand plea. Through the persistence of repetition, the trauma they announce is reclaimed as a source of pleasure; the decorative absorbs the loss. The

pattern is indexical of the walk, the rhythmic call, the lack, and equally the excess of the search. Similar to propaganda textiles fabricated during WWII, an unlikely theme is promoted inside the usually safe, or neutrally, decorated interior. In a direct refutation of the flâneur or the tourist, Katz and Wills insert themselves into the context of Mexico City through a fantasy insistence that they have a pet, as only someone local could have, and by extension, are not lost or temporary, but already rooted in a sense of daily life.

An initial reference for the project was a small stone dog, carved at the corner of a medieval tomb next to the toe of the deceased, a Flemish noblewoman. The little dog is shown undoing the lace of her shoe. What does it mean to be ‘undone’ even in the most formal situation of a tomb portrait, in death? Marginal details can become whole stories and elaborate patterns. The decision to paint on a textured, porous, plaster wall originates in Katz and Wills’s shared visits to see Jean Cocteau’s mural for the Notre–Dame de France Church in London. Cocteau was said to be heard chatting to the characters he was painting, invoking the wall as a kind of ear. The exhibition *Perra Perdida* thus proposes new models of conversation, to shift expectations about what constitutes a sentient being, where content can be found, and how an authentic voice unfolds.

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