

*They were two superior eels
at the bottom of the tank and they recognised each other like
italics.**

The Shape of a Right Statement brings together works by Cynthia Maughan with Ben Kinmont and Wu Tsang – works returning to a sense of impotence coupled with a stubborn and at times spiteful desire to continue, and carve out a space anyway.

Between 1973 and 1980 Cynthia Maughan produced nearly 300 self-directed performances for the camera, staged and recorded in her studio. In these videos, a low-fi aesthetic and affection for the absurd gain conceptual focus through her careful use of language as a framing device and self-fulfilling speech act.

Maughan's works on paper and her videos, most of which are no more than two, three minutes in length, turn to a wilful and subversive approach – a stubborn reluctance and self-described 'lazy anarchism'. In the process she moves across registers of meaning and intention, putting to work her non-linear understanding of survivalism and fascination with slippages between sincerity and manipulation. After showing work in art contexts in the late 1970s, her practice increasingly migrated to punk/DIY music venues in the early 1980s, also creating a space of relative, and partially deliberate invisibility. This exhibition draws on a body of newly digitised video works, whilst also working with Maughan as a writer, musician and maker of collages, fanzines and drawings.

The piece of Wu Tsang, from which this exhibition takes its name, draws on Tsang's performance technique of the 'full body quotation'. Working as a proposition for how citing can be an embodied, and invested form of making work, Tsang mimetically steps into an original speaker's tone, breath, accent and idiom. The approach seeks to insert a question mark into notions of authenticity and the intention of the speaker – a process of understanding content differently, out of its original context. In the 2008 video shown in this exhibition, Tsang draws on a manifesto delivered by autism rights activist Amanda Baggs, a dialogue with appropriation and honesty where the relationship to the source is deliberately complex.

Ben Kinmont's presence in The Shape of a Right Statement takes the form of his 1988 piece Carl Andre killed his wife, realised in the year Andre was acquitted. The work is an unnerving double-act, at once a slap-in-the-face proclamation of 'truth' and yet, also a complex grappling with language, and the shape and responsibility of a statement of weight. A further part of the exhibition

is a newly realised painting in his ongoing series Also, a work and a transaction drawing on Kinmont's long-running engagement and fascination with directness and empathy, and the emotional charge of what it might be to make work and also to communicate that working.

Cynthia Maughan was born in 1949 in Bell, California. Her work has been shown in Documenta 6, Kassel, Germany, De Appel, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, NY; The J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center, Los Angeles and was recently digitised in full by the Getty Research Institute. Maughan has also played in bands including Auto De Fé, the Nihils, Primitive State and The Shrews. She currently lives in Los Angeles.

Ben Kinmont was born in 1963 in Burlington, Vermont. He is an artist, publisher, and antiquarian bookseller living in Sebastopol, California. Kinmont's work is concerned with the value structures surrounding an art practice and what happens when that practice is displaced into a non-art space. Recent exhibitions include those at Air de Paris; Whitney Biennial 2014; ICA, London; Documenta 11, Kassel; Centre Pompidou, Paris and a traveling survey show entitled Prospectus.

Wu Tsang was born in 1982 in Massachusetts and is a Los Angeles based filmmaker, artist, and performer. His projects have been presented at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Tate Modern, London; the Whitney Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, and the New Museum, New York. In 2012, he participated in the Whitney Biennial and New Museum Triennial, New York; Gwangju Biennial, South Korea and the Liverpool Biennial.

*Anne Carson, *Autobiography of Red: A Novel in Verse*

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