

For her third solo exhibition at Pilar Corrias Gallery, *Objects Without Shadow*, German artist Ulla von Brandenburg presents a new series of paintings alongside a constellation of objects and props that take leave from her recent film *Sink Down Mountain, Raise Up Valley*, which explores ideas and rituals from the commune of Saint-Simonians — a French political and social movement of the early 1800s.

Ulla von Brandenburg has a richly complex and multifaceted practice that is realised through a combination of black & white film, installation, performance, drawing, and painting. The vocabulary of von Brandenburg's work comes from a basis of using approaches and methods of the theatre, the stage, and rules of performance to engage with cultural or social issues from different moments in history to explore how stories, rituals, and symbols of the past have constituted our societies.

In *Sink Down Mountain, Raise Up Valley* (2015) von Brandenburg has staged a 'film-performance' that dramatises elements of the rituals, tools, dress, and song of the Saint-Simonian movement. The Saint-Simonian ideology was founded on the ideas of the utopian socialist Claude Henri de Rouvroy (1760-1825), who envisaged a future society based on the spirit of science and industry, where each individual would find fulfilment through the exercise of their productive powers in a hierarchical society that is overseen by technocrats. Following de Rouvroy's death the late faction of the Saint-Simonian movement became akin to a church under the guidance of Barthélemy Prosper Enfantin (1796-1865) whose followers called 'supreme father' or 'Père'. As leader Père dispatched emissaries to Constantinople in search of his counterpoint a 'woman messiah' who would liberate and preside over their new religious order. *Sink Down Mountain, Raise Up Valley* follows a set of characters, including Père, wandering through the backstage and stage areas of The New Riga Theatre, performing to the lyrics of the film's titular song, written by von Brandenburg and based on a 1830s Saint-Simonian folk song. The Saint-Simonian church dissipated following their futile search for a woman messiah; in *Sink Down Mountain, Raise Up Valley* the messiah woman appears in a poetic, dream-like sequence in the final emancipating moments of the film. *Sink Down Mountain, Raise Up Valley* is shot in black & white on 16mm film in one continuous take; as with most of von Brandenburg's films when watching the performance unfold it is not always clear what temporal context we have landed in, however the black & white footage emphasises that it is outside of our time as a viewer.

In *Objects Without Shadow* von Brandenburg considers how the film is viewed in relation to the other works in the show as an installation. The seven large paintings on the ground floor gallery are paired with various objects—a box of ribbons, a type of dream catcher, a fishing rod—leant against

their surfaces. The paintings give the illusion of portals, covered with different coloured curtains creased with folds. A process of light-sensitive recording captures the drape of the curtain on the surface of the canvas; von Brandenburg gives rise to the image through exposure to light. The use of the curtain is a consistent motif in her practice; the curtain demarcates a boundary between layers of reality, it marks a place of transition between the viewer and theatrical stage, the body and image, light and shadow. The different objects in the gallery connote references to carnivalesque, ceremonial and shamanistic practices; they become props that hold the potential to make contact to another world or call forward a psychological consciousness. The relationships between her paintings and the objects, whether spatially or thematically, anticipate something from the film and occupying a place between the film and the exhibition space.

*Sink Down Mountain, Raise Up Valley* (2015) was co-produced by Ulla von Brandenburg and kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga, Latvia as part of the actionNouveaux commanditaires of Fondation de France, Paris.

ULLA VON BRANDENBURG (b. 1974 in Karlsruhe, Germany) lives and works in Paris. Forthcoming in November 2015 von Brandenburg will premiere a specially designed film installation for Performa 15 in New York. In 2016 she will hold significant solo exhibitions at ACCA, Melbourne; La Fondrerie Darling, Montréal; Power Plant, Toronto; Musée des Beaux Arts de Rennes, Rennes; and Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich. Major solo exhibitions of her work include: *Ulla von Brandenburg: Wagon Wheel*, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, St. Louis (2015); *24 Filme, Kein Schnitt*, MAMCO, Geneva (2014); *Inside is not Outside*, Kunstverein Hannover, Hannover (2014); *Innen ist nicht Außen*, Secession, Vienna (2013); *Kunstpreis Finkenwerder 2013*, Kunsthau Hamburg, Hamburg (2013); *Das Versteck des W.L.*, Kunsthalle Hamburg, Hamburg (2013); *Neue Alte Welt*, The Common Guild, Glasgow (2011); *Name or Number*, Frac Ile-de-France/Le Plateau, Paris (2009); *Ulla von Brandenburg*, Chisenhale Gallery, London (2009); *Whose beginning is not, nor end cannot be*, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2008); *Passengers 1.68 Ulla von Brandenburg*, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art, San Francisco (2008). Significant group exhibitions include: *Accrochage 3: Pop & Musique/Son*, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris (2015); *Et bien dansez maintenant !*, Centre d'art contemporain de Pontmain, Pontmain (2015); *After Dark*, MAMCO, Geneva (2015); *Vidéodanse, Le corps en jeu*, Space 315, Centre Pompidou, Paris (2015); *The Other Side*, CAC, Vilnius (2014); *Explore*, Frac Île-de-France, château de Rentilly, Bussy-Saint-Martin (2014); *A Guest Without a Host is a Ghost*, The Kadist Collection in residency, Le Caire (2014); *19th Biennale of Sydney: You Imagine What You Desire*, Sydney (2014); *The Crime was Almost Perfect*, Witte de With, Rotterdam (2014); *Film as Sculpture*, WIELS Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels (2013); *The Objects*, Glasgow Sculpture Studio, Glasgow (2013); *Tools for*

*Conviviality*, The Power Plant, Toronto (2012); *Intense Proximité*, La Triennale, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2012); *A Terrible Beauty is Born*, 11th Biennale de Lyon, Lyon (2011); *Secret Societies. To Know, To Dare, To Will, To Keep Silence*, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2011); *Spatial City*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit (2010); *Making Worlds*, 53rd International Art Exhibition Venice Biennale, Venice (2009); *YOKOHAMA 2008, International Triennale of Contemporary Art*, Yokohama (2008); *Wizard of Oz*, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco (2008); *The World as a Stage*, ICA, Boston (2008); *Performa07, the 2nd Visual Art Performance Biennial*, New York (2007); *The World as a Stage*, Tate Modern, London (2007).

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