

Esther Schipper is pleased to present Ceal Floyer's fourth solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition includes three installation works, a suite of works on paper and an audio work. These new works combine key aspects of the artist's oeuvre: small interventions that dramatically change our perception of a space, precise word play, and a fine, albeit somewhat subversive sense of humor.

In a characteristic reversal of boundaries, the artist has installed bars generally found on the outside of buildings inside, effectively rendering the windows unusable and the bars without identifiable function. While her previous exhibition at the gallery "welcomed" the visitors on their way out, the window bars suggest the reversal of inside and outside, public and private.

A narrow row of black wooden blocks runs through the room at its widest. Assembled from seemingly countless Domino pieces, it acts as enigmatic, miniaturized wall. Set in a tight row, the playing side—the characteristic dots that determine the game—remains invisible, forcing the spectator to accept the artist's word for their identity. In addition, while their title has become synonymous with the very act of falling (or falling in line), the stones cannot anymore have the consequential *Domino Effect* for which they have become a symbol. Bereft of face and movement, what makes them Dominos?

A large suite of drawings that covers most of one wall proposes a different kind of defacement and play on identity: the works were created by retracing contact numbers stored in the artist's phone on a standard numerical keypad. In effect, portraits of numbers—of the dictate of constant availability—and the owner of the phone—you are who you know—the simple geometry translates social habits and constraints of contemporary digitalized communication into unassuming but precise analog shapes. After the initial impulse to decrypt and identify the numbers, the pleasure of comparing the recurring pattern of these shapes that can mean both so much and so little takes over.

A work entitled *Saw* transforms the second room into the realm of two-dimensional fantasies. Reminiscent of the iconographic trope from cartoons, a large rectangular serrated saw blade appears to stick out from the parquet floor, ostensibly in the process of cutting a large circular hole into the ground from below. Although only a thin line delineates this "cut out" section, *Saw* dramatically changes the way we experience the room, undermining the trust in the permanence of the ground on which we stand and generally take for granted. If we really were in a cartoon, of course, most likely the center were to hold while the rest of the world would disappear.

With characteristic wit, Ceal Floyer supplies her own soundtrack of clapping hands. The congratulatory gesture is slightly distorted and further undercut by its repetition from two speakers

set illogically close. The work's title, *Mutual Admiration*, adds an element of derision, as the term often refers to two persons entangled in a dynamic of uncritical giving of praise. Since we are listening essentially to a dialogue of one, we may take this as Ceal Floyer's wry comment on the requirements of an artist's existence—the necessity of public display and longing for acclaim. This being said, there is of course also comfort to be had as beneficiary of mutual appreciation.

Ceal Floyer's work often uses everyday objects or images to introduce defamiliarizing and somewhat startling moments into the spectator's experience of a space. Slight alterations to found objects, that are usually familiar from everyday experiences (like a hairbrush, the sign for an emergency exit, or the projection of an image of a nail) create often surprising interventions that heighten the awareness of our surroundings. The play with expectations and the misuse of technical equipment (in effect, removing or subtly subverting its intended function) are another continuous themes in Ceal Floyer's work. Often the artist mixes visual and linguistic references, often also to the site, combining semantic levels in a disorienting and witty way.

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