

An autobiography is, in difference to a formal description, a narrative account of one's own life, which is informed by a specific perspective. It carries factual information as well as an imagined self-depiction, with additions or omissions, and is framed through particular interests of the teller. In a way, an autobiography is as much an exploration of oneself as of one's relationship to other people, places, and politics. Through the way in which we describe ourselves, we imagine the world we live in, in its relationships of external forces, and our own constructions of reality.

The exhibition *Autobiography*, opening at Index on 22 January 2016, presents works and texts by international artists and writers that offer different approaches to the complexities and politics of subjectivity. In recent years, artists have increasingly employed writing in their practice, both in a formal sense, through text, and with an interest in story-telling. In many instances, a narration from an I-perspective implies the artist-person in the context that was described, in order to explore the way in which otherwise abstract social questions affect subjectivity. The exhibition draws connections between writing, film and artists' work, and how these practices interact. Works in the exhibition include films and video, amongst others by writer Chris Kraus, who's novel "I love Dick" was recently described as a book "everyone should read" (The Guardian), and an adaption of Kathy Acker's play "Implosion" by German artist Loretta Fahrenholz. A chapter of Kraus' forthcoming book about Kathy Acker will be available as a recorded reading. Los Angeles-based artist Martine Syms will present works from her ongoing research about the representation of blackness in TV situation comedy. Further works include fanzines and a drawing by painter Amy Sillman, a Powerpoint animation by Frances Stark, and a wallpaper with excerpts from Riet Wijnen's anthology of writer's pseudonyms.

The exhibition draws inspiration from an essay by philosopher Judith Butler, "Giving an Account of Oneself" (2001), in which she analyzes the relationship between recognition of external aspects and self-formation. While subjectivity is necessarily contingent on its context and instable, it allows also to create a more relational ethics: "The recognition that one is, at every turn, not quite the same as what one thinks that one is, might imply, in turn, a certain patience for others that suspends the demand that they be selfsame at every moment. Suspending the demand for self-identity or, more particularly, for complete coherence, seems to me to counter a certain ethical violence that demands that we manifest and maintain selfidentity at all times and require that others do the same." (J.B., "Giving an Account of Oneself", in: *Diacritics*, Vol. 31, No. 4., Winter 2001, p. 22-40, here p. 27) With works by Loretta Fahrenholz, Chris Kraus, Beth Laurin, Amy Sillman, Frances Stark, Martine Syms, Sergei Tcherepnin, Riet Wijnen, Martha Wilson, Felicia von Zweigbergk, and an extensive section with documents, books and magazines. The exhibition is accompanied by a program with readings and events.

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