

Lisa Cooley is thrilled to announce *When Wayne Went Away*, the gallery's first exhibition by Glasgow-based artist Sue Tompkins. Tompkins's charisma and output have garnered her a cult-like following internationally, and though she has exhibited widely, this will be her first solo gallery exhibition in the United States.

Tompkins's work is an inquiry into language and personal expression. She is drawn to the marginal and trivial fragments of speech that are otherwise lost in the overload of everyday conversation and reading. Picking up splices of these fragments, she pulls from a collection of remote words and phrases to generate her text-based artworks and performances. By adding random movements, gestures, sentences, and implied phrases—spoken, smeared (often by hand) with paint on canvas, or typed onto newsprint or fluorescent paper—she is able to refresh anesthetized language through recontextualization.

Odd and singular, her layering, arranging, and configuring of language appear in a variety of mediums. Spoken word performances are based on accumulated pages of typewritten text that are thoroughly edited and intimately composed in spite of the felt spontaneity in her reading. With an awkward yet sincere and strangely beautiful voice, she delivers a series of utterances and words forced against the grain of language as we typically hear or read it, revealing the arbitrariness of word combinations and the ambiguity of their meaning. The title of this exhibition is a phrase taken from one such performance, in this context implying the loss felt and void left when someone goes away. Such voids, however, simultaneously suggest openness and opportunity.

In her physical works, text and paint are applied in a free associative manner. The paintings in this exhibition offer points of punctuation, but also a reprieve from an isolated comprehension—much in the same way we communicate with each other nonverbally. Oftentimes these cues can be transparent, but they may also be oblique—one's understanding can synchronize or dissolve. Tompkins's typewriter pieces continue this manipulation of language. In one work, she has typed a WOMAN LIKE YOU BABY SHOULD NEVER HAVE THE BLUES. The message is intimate, but the artist has assumed a new gender, and thereby, in her unpretentious way, Tompkins both distorts and invigorates what we expect from words. She points to possibility and to hollowness, imbricating these spaces with text, gesture, and sound.

Sue Tompkins was born in Leighton Buzzard in 1971 and graduated from the Glasgow School of Art in 1994. She has had solo or two-person exhibitions in numerous venues, including Glasgow International, 2014; Micky Schubert, Berlin, 2014; The Modern Institute, Glasgow, 2013; Diana Stigter, Amsterdam, 2013; Inverleith House, Edinburgh, 2011; Contemporary Art Museum St.

Louis, 2009; and Showroom, London, 2007, among others. Tompkins has also performed at institutions and events around the world, notably the Dia Art Foundation, 2011; Tate Britain, 2006; and the Scottish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, 2005.

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