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→ Keren Cytter

Selection

11 06 — 08 09 2016

Press talk

June 10, 12 noon

Opening

June 10, 6pm

Supported by

AVL Cultural Foundation



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→ The Israeli artist and filmmaker Keren Cytter (born 1977 in Tel Aviv; lives in New York City) is currently one of the most innovative and multifaceted video artists of our time. Cytter captures and explores human relationships, particularly the behaviors and interactions performed in everyday life. Working with narrative, she plays with humorous, absurd, and subtle dialogues, which at times mix fictitious situations with real life. In accordance with the complexity of social conditions, her critique is not merely legibly formulated; rather specific themes are developed with sensitivity in elaborately written screenplays, in her work with actors, and in the final editing, while on a structural level, everything is precisely depicted in astonishing diversity. In developing her artistic work she appears to trace the changes in society seismographically, striking a timely nerve in an amazingly condensed, pointed, and exact manner.

The artist became known for her experimental videos in which she explored the question of how media culture influences relationships among human beings. Her films are ostensibly not about linear narrative or the search for "truth" within a narrative, but about how relationships, ideas, and states of mind are given an externalized shape. In her videos individual components are brought together under certain conditions. Some have the air of a lab experiment. Cytter unites and overlaps various narrative leaps and strands, geographical situations, layers of time, and ascribed roles. Thought and language often become one. The artist avoids filmmaking that is about the pure expression and representation of the protagonists' affective language of emotions and thoughts by employing film techniques: spiraling, repetitive narratives, leaps in editing, double exposures, artificial lighting, or the split screen. Cytter's works of art are ambivalent—a mixture of high and low, enthusiasm and suspicion. In an interview, the artist asserted, "The humor comes out of embarrassment and the serious part out of stress." The videos avoid obvious interpretations while evoking confusion and irritation, as well as pleasure and surprise.

For the elaborate solo show *Selection* at KM– Graz, Cytter presents a selection of videos and other works embedded in the reconstructed exhibition space. In a surprising turn, the artist not only reverses the situation at the entrance of the institution, in the direction of delivering large objects, but she's also built a mirrored parcours that provides a fresh view of a personal selection of her oeuvre, which has been growing for more than fifteen years; it allows the audience to actively participate, becoming something like one of the actors in her videos. In the videos shown Cytter is partly inspired by John Cassavetes (*Untitled*) or Pierre Paolo Passolini (*Force from the Past; In Search of Brothers*). At the same time, she makes use of different genres: the slasher film, film noir, French auteur cinema, and melodrama, as well as news formats and music clips. In doing so, Cytter also references the visual vocabulary of experimental and classic cinema, as well as literature, theater, and pop-culture soap operas or YouTube fragments. She combines elements of documentary and fictional background to create an expressive collection of film motifs. One of the artist's favorite strategies, however, is to quickly expose these film clichés in bizarre or comical ways.

Even though the pieces do not attempt to tell a specific story, fragments of narrative and plot are generated from time to time. The videos do not illustrate a story, but as a deliberate film entity, they form a panopticon of everyday scenes. In them the artist works on the kinds of images and codes that are consumed today through different devices and cameras. She also supplements the original material with clips from various other sources. The videos enhance their standpoints and views, interweaving at the end to form a subjective standpoint, which, at the same time, allows one to recognize the diversity of her artistic production.

For this show, Cytter has made a new video, *Object*, filmed in her apartment in New York. In *Object* she radically alters the function of her private space, covering much of it with tarp, and making a swimming pool in the courtyard, which is filled with water and used in wintertime. Using personalized "continents," the video investigates constantly changing social relationships and global intrigues, yet it also represents a poetic game with forms of communication and their power relations.

A novel written by the artist accompanies the exhibition (Sternberg Press, Berlin).

Curated by Sandro Droschl.

The exhibition is generously supported by the AVL Cultural Foundation (Graz).

Short biography

Keren Cytter has made more than sixty videos; her oeuvre also includes drawings and photographs. She has written novels, a libretto, plays and performances. In 2010 she founded the dance group Dance International Europe Now (D.I.E. Now).

From 1997 to 1999 Cytter studied at the Avni Institute in Tel Aviv. She worked at the renowned Institution de Ateliers in Amsterdam from 2002 to 2004. In 2006 the artist received the Balôise Art Prize at Art Basel and the Ars Viva Prize from the Kulturkeises der deutschen Wirtschaft in Berlin in 2008.

Recent solo exhibitions: Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2015); Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen (2014); State of Concept, Athens (2014); Tate Modern Oil Tanks, London (2012); Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (2011); Kunstverein München, Munich (2011); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2010); Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2010).

Press talk: June 10, 2016, 12 noon

Press download: <http://www.km-k.at/en/exhibition/keren-cytter/press/>

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Side program An Art Day's Night:

July 7, 2016, 6pm: Lecture by Antonio Grulli, curator & critic, Bologna

Sept 1, 2016, 6pm: Lecture by Kathy Noble, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London

Sept 8, 2016, 6pm: Lecture by Rainer Fuchs, mumok, Vienna



Keren Cytter, Object, 2016, HD video, 27 min, commissioned by Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst & Medien, Graz, courtesy the artist



Keren Cytter, Object, 2016, HD video, 27 min, commissioned by Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst & Medien, Graz, courtesy the artist