Queer Thoughts is honored to present an exhibition featuring the work of Los Angeles based painter Monica Majoli, and London based filmmaker Ruth Novaczek. The exhibition will include a new film by Novaczek, *Footnote* (2017), and a previously unexhibited collection of preliminary photographs taken by Majoli for her series *Black Mirror* (2009-2012). In both artist's work, instances of absence and loss (as they relate in particular to love and desire) are foregrounded as a primary site through which experience gains meaning. Loss, and love, are reified in the artists' work as a means of accepting and transcending pain, the most radically private and incommunicable aspect of subjectivity.

The titles of Novaczek's film and Majoli's photographs situate both works as relative to some larger composition; supplements to a text that exists, but in perpetual annotation. In *Footnote*, Novaczek narrates a mash-up love letter between distant partners, and its juxtapositions illuminate poetic details that remain after love [i.e. the major work]: photographs, sense memories, and emotional projections that instill cinema, literature and music with personal resonance. Similarly, Majoli's *Primary Materials for Black Mirror* comprises photographs taken as source material for her series of paintings, drawings and lithographs, *Black Mirror*, which were first exhibited in 2010 and 2012. While *Primary Materials* literally refer to an existing, discrete body of works, they also serve as a document of the emotional life of the artist, in their depiction of Majoli's former lovers of the past 25 years. Staged in the artist's Los Angeles bedroom, Majoli invited her exes to be photographed nude via their reflections in the room's black mirrored walls (a vestigial feature of the home's 1970's decor). As semblances emerging from a black void, the women who populate *Black Mirror* are both acting and giving testimony in a narrative of the artist's life, at its most intense and private moments. However, what the paintings convey as an extant form of desire memorialized as artifact, differs from the photographs which refer more closely to the act of their creation: the meeting of two former partners in a darkened bedroom.

Majoli has characterized her work since the early 1990's as always having a documentary quality, in its representation of factual sexual acts (both from her own experience, and those recounted to her by her close friend Paul). That the psychological content of these works exceeds their explicit images owes to their status as simulations of the artist's recollection. In contrast, the *Black Mirror* photographs depict the actual taking place of an event, even if the images (especially those which later became paintings) stand as metonyms for a romantic relationship in its entirety.

Novaczek's films have in common with Majoli their tethering to the real events of the artist's biography, and much of the footage used in Novaczek's films records non-fictional moments of her life. The categories of documentary and found footage are radically expanded in this context, to the

point of becoming equivalent. Rather, everything is found, whether from a canonical source, on the internet, or the artist's camera or phone; any fragment can be inhabited by an author who appropriates significance from its text. If Novaczek's singular work displays an affinity with contemporary literature's pastiche techniques (the artist's friends Eileen Myles and Chris Kraus appear in *Footnote* as a mystic and a guide), it is the candid authenticity of her work that enables quotation from cinema and literature to feel as deeply personal as to be confessional. In *Footnote*'s epistolary narrative, Novaczek blends personal correspondences to women with whom she has been involved, with excerpts from the published letters between Franz Kafka and two of his lovers, Felice Bauer and Milena Jesenská, superimposing fragments of text over disjunctively edited and manipulated scenes of cinema and everyday life.

(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)