

Matt Keegan: Film Screening
July 2–August 14, 2026
Lower Level

Magenta Plains is pleased to present a selection of five videos by Matt Keegan that address the complexities of language, personal identity, cultural norms, and societal structures by appropriating certain pedagogical and advertising methods. Keegan's personal archive of English language teaching flashcards assembled by his mother in the 1990s ties the suite of videos together. Inspiring multiple bodies of work since 2010, the flashcards were collaged from mass-market print materials such as clothing catalogues and used in his mother's classroom to introduce newly emigrated students to the English language.

The two-channel video, *N as in Nancy* (2011), is a key work in Keegan's ongoing exploration of vernacular expression that probes the ways photographic images evoke language and syntax. The video features a montage of Keegan's mother, Nancy, reading aloud her homemade flashcards, evoking both the absurdities and poignancies baked into the process of cultural assimilation. The work blurs the boundary between documentary and art practice, utilizing familial relationships as both the subject and the methodology for investigating how meaning is produced.

Each of the four single-channel videos from 2019 transform individual flashcards into a time-based format; a still life (*2 Gallons of Milk*), a portrait (*Ready for Work*), a remake of a *NY Times Magazine* cover story depicting a variety of commuters from different cultural backgrounds (*Fellow Travelers*), and a brief soap opera-like conversation based on an actual exchange with Keegan's maternal grandmother (*College Graduate*). The videos demonstrate familial relationships, bilingual and first-generation American households, the mispronunciation of colloquial idioms, and ambient sounds of suburban domestic life.

While commercial media uses the fourth wall to sell a product, Keegan uses it to recuperate personal and social histories. By animating static advertising imagery into commercial-length videos and having his actors address the camera directly, he effectively turns the attention toward the viewer to address how media shapes our collective consciousness.

Matt Keegan (b. 1976, Manhasset, NY) has over the course of his career worked fluidly across mediums, creating sculptures, photographs, videos, and text-based works that probe the myriad ways in which art and language mediate the personal experience of physical space as well as historical, social, and political events.

Keegan's artistic practice often parallels contemporaneous publishing projects, and at times a confluence of the two modes of production has compelled the artist to develop new arenas for artistic discourse and collaboration. In 2008 Keegan published *AMERICAMERICA*, an artist book commissioned and published by Printed Matter, NY, which focuses on the year 1986 and its correspondence with 2008. The book opens with documentation of a 2007 road trip, inspired by *Hands Across America*, in which Keegan cast the hands of mayors located between New York and New Mexico. In 2003 Keegan co-founded the annual publication *North Drive Press* with Lizzy Lee, a childhood friend. Numbering five issues between 2004 and 2010, the unconventional project operated as an alternative space for artist-to-artist interviews and art multiples. *North Drive Press* is included in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the New York Public Library, The Library at the Hessel Museum and Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, and the Beinecke Library at Yale University, among others.

Matt Keegan's work has been exhibited at museums such as the Athenaeum at the University of Georgia, Athens, GA; Museum of Modern Art, NY; Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA; Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, TX; Grazer Kunstverein, Graz, AT; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, Bilbao, ES, and Berlin, DE; The Kitchen, New York, NY; The Art Institute of Chicago, IL; and the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY.

Keegan's work is represented in numerous museum and private collections worldwide, including the Museum of Modern Art, NY; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, among others. He received his MFA from Columbia University in 2004, attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2001, and his BFA from Carnegie Mellon University in 1998. Keegan is currently a Senior Critic in the Painting & Printmaking Department at Yale University. Keegan lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.