

On the Verge of an Image: Considering Marjorie Keller

The Gamble House
October 8 – December 11, 2016
Curated by Alika Cooper and Anna Mayer
Presented by LAND (Los Angeles Nomadic Division)

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION:

On the Verge of an Image: Considering Marjorie Keller is a group exhibition of sculpture, painting, photography, video, and performance centered on the themes present in the work of under-recognized avant-garde filmmaker Marjorie Keller (1950-1994), co-curated by Los Angeles-based artists Alika Cooper and Anna Mayer. Cooper and Mayer seek to establish the significance of Keller's contributions to visual culture, and to make visible states of being that are difficult to articulate or are deliberately avoided by mainstream culture. The exhibition considers Keller's insistence on occupying a position not easily consumed by a singular ideological agenda. Her films are significant in the way they make clear the primacy of bodily engagement as a place from which to critique the status quo. Cooper and Mayer have chosen contemporary and historical works that explore the material aspects of vision and the act of envisioning, along with artists who have created commissioned site-specific works, responding directly to these themes within the context of the Gamble House. Included works range from figurative/representational painting and film to process-based sculptural works and performances that register the presence and absence of bodies and objects. In honor of Keller's complex relationship to the feminism of her time, *On the Verge of an Image: Considering Marjorie Keller* presents artworks from multiple perspectives and stances.

The exhibition explores links between motifs and strategies emerging from Keller's films, as well as the themes present in her work. Participating artists include renowned international practitioners from Keller's generation, as well as younger artists, along with a selection of Keller's work. Participating artists include Chantal Akerman, Shiva Aliabadi, Vanessa Beecroft, Ashley Carter, Alika Cooper, Cheryl Donegan, VALIE EXPORT, Naomi Fisher, Nan Goldin, Trulee Grace Hall, Donna Huanca, Kartemquin Films, Marjorie Keller, Josh Mannis, Anna Mayer, Paul Pescador, Vincent Ramos, Carolee Schneemann, and Jennifer West.

ABOUT LAND (LOS ANGELES NOMADIC DIVISION):

Established in 2009, LAND (Los Angeles Nomadic Division) is a non-profit organization dedicated to curating site-specific public art exhibitions. Through commissions of site-specific works with national and international contemporary artists, collaborations with arts institutions and organizations, and a wide variety of programming, LAND supports dynamic and untraditional artistic practices. Large-scale, multi-site, multi-artist and monographic exhibitions as well as one night ephemeral performances and durational events are all part of LAND's programming repertoire. LAND believes that everyone deserves the opportunity to experience innovative contemporary art in their day-to-day lives. In turn, artists deserve the opportunity to realize projects, otherwise unsupported, at unique sites in the public realm.

For more information, please visit www.nomadicdivision.org or send an email to info@nomadicdivision.org.

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ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES:

Chantal Akerman

Chantal Akerman's (b. 1950, Brussels, BEL, d. 2015) films are cinematic experiences that reflect on the inner domestic lives of women and the problematic nature of the representational abilities of cinema. By often forsaking conventional devices such as dialogue or plot and displaying a lack of visual hierarchy, the late Belgian director builds a startling and uncomfortable tension between the subject and their environment. Long, unbroken takes and careful, fixed camera placement draw the viewer in, making Akerman's films an intensely personal experience. Akerman's over 47 movie credits – including *La Chambre* (1972), *Je Tu Il Elle* (1974), and *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Commerce Quai, 1080 Brussels* (1975) – have been shown at institutions such as Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp, BEL.

Shiva Aliabadi

Shiva Aliabadi's (b. 1977, London, ENG) hybrid practice is deeply invested in ephemeral gestures that combine minimalism, performativity, and material transformation. Her use of *Holi* powder, thin latex, copper sheeting, and other mutable materials activate a dynamic dialogue between physical stability and constant flux, cutting to the core of existential notions related to time, space, and temporality. Whether immortalizing discarded objects or presenting precarious imprints of objects which have been destroyed, Aliabadi leaves the viewer with just an idea of the original that changes over time, much like our memories of incidents, objects, and people that we attempt to memorialize. Aliabadi's work has been exhibited at institutions including the Yokohama-Tokyo Triennial, Tokyo, Japan; Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA; and Espace des Arts Sans Frontieres, Paris, FR.

Vanessa Beecroft

Vanessa Beecroft's (b. 1969, Genoa, ITA) large-scale performances and installations address conceptual as well as aesthetic concerns, referencing the political, historical, or social significance of the location in which it is held. These ephemeral compositions, often using live, nude, female models, explore concepts such as feminism, voyeurism, and shame. Structured to both interact with the live event participants as well as be captured through video recordings and photographs which Beecroft regards as separate works of art, the artist's approach is neither performance nor documentary, but something in between. Beecroft's work has been performed at the National Gallery, London, UK; the Galleria Nazionale Arte Antica Rome, IT; and MoMA PS1, New York, NY, among others.

Ashley Carter

Ashley Carter's (b. 1990, New York, NY) sculptural installations suspend moments of dislocation and disassociation in materials, images, space, and perception. Construction and industrial materials such as rebar, steel, and silicone serve to investigate architecture, the human body, and their potentially parasitic relationship. These structures build up the quality of space and tension in her work as they support and contort the balance of weight and value presented to the viewer. Having recently received her MFA from Columbia in 2013, Carter's recent shows were held at Kimberly Klark, New York, NY and Halsey McKay, East Hampton, NY.

Alika Cooper

Alika Cooper (b. 1979, Guam, USA) uses gendered tropes of domesticity (such as wallpaper, quilting, fabric, etc.) to examine the practice of representation by and of women in the field of art. Based on sexualized photographs of women by artists such as Helmut Newton, Brassai, and Man Ray, Cooper recreates formerly sexualized images in rogue fields of color patterns and abstraction. Moving between representation and figuration, Cooper's work strips the images of their titillating or exhibitionist qualities and instead focuses on locating connections between the female form and organic and geometric shapes and figures. Cooper's work has been shown at Actual Size, Los Angeles, CA; MULHERIN, Toronto, CAN; and Western Exhibitions, Chicago, IL; among others.

Cheryl Donegan

Cheryl Donegan (b. 1962, New Haven, CT) interrogates gender, sex, and contemporary culture through integrating time-based, gestural forms of performance and video with painting, drawing, and installation. Using her body as a metaphor to subvert confining clichés prevalent in consumer culture, Donegan's earlier work often involved performative actions resulting in paintings or drawings. Currently her work plays within the same themes but now employs a methodical quality, painting textile patterns and making use of glitchy, lo-fi, found footage videos of consumer objects and spaces. Donegan has exhibited at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; MoMA PS1, New York, NY; and the Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, among others.

VALIE EXPORT

VALIE EXPORT's (b. 1940, Linz, AUT) work is the product of a multi-disciplinary practice spanning performance, video installation, and experimental film as well as many other techniques and formats. Her work directly confronts societal norms surrounding

relationships, politics, experience, and personal identity. By challenging what is traditionally called cinema, she produces moments where the viewer is pushed to personally grapple with these societal concepts in a physical and intimate manner. EXPORT has exhibited at a wide range of institutions including Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, FR; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; and MOCA, Los Angeles, CA, among others.

Naomi Fisher

Naomi Fisher (b. 1976, Miami, FL) highlights relationships between the body and nature, interventions of architecture, and representations of gender through her highly interdisciplinary practice encompassing painting, performance, photography, dance, and video. Raised the daughter of a Miami botanist, Fisher draws from her experience straddling the untamed tropical environment and the urban population's tendency towards artifice and material excess. Many of her works are collaborative in nature, performing with professionally trained dancers or managing a public arts space. Fisher has shown exhibited and performed at institutions such as the Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, Miami, FL; Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MI; and Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR.

Nan Goldin

Nan Goldin's (b. 1953, Washington, DC) photography provides a snapshot into her intensely personal, spontaneous, sexual, and transgressive world of friends, family, and lovers. Vivid colors and candid portraits create a rich glimpse of LGBTQ and drag queen communities in the late seventies and eighties. Capturing simultaneously unnerving and heartwarming moments of brutality and tenderness in such a familiar way gives intense emotional force to her images. Goldin's work has been exhibited at the Whitney Museum of Art, New York, NY; Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR; and Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, UK, among others.

Trulee Grace Hall

Trulee Grace Hall (b. 1976, Atlanta, GA) works in video, painting, sculpture, and sound to create immersive installations where the spectacle is made transparent and the artificial is given a central role. In Hall's work, gender and sexuality are stretched and stressed, sounding out dynamic and evolving parameters, balancing somewhere between the embarrassing and the sublime. Binaries, such as the separation between humans and nature, are consistently brought into focus, interplayed, and subjected to ritualized unification processes. Her work has been exhibited at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA and Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE), Los Angeles, CA, among others.

Donna Huanca

Donna Huanca (b. 1980, Chicago, IL) creates immersive sculptures, installations, and performances centered around clothing she scrounges from second-hand and local shops while on international travel. Huanca uses clothes as powerful stand-ins for the human body to explore origins, memory, time, and identity in order to evoke the complexity of influences that shape who we are. She also incorporates live models which interact with her works – comprised of various arrangements of dyed and altered clothing, canvases marked with makeup, and objects recalling glass boxes and mirrors – in performative assemblages which create hallucinatory, surreal moments for their audience. Her work has been exhibited at MoMA PS1, New York, NY; Malmö Konsthalle, Malmö, SE; and Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna, AU, among others.

Marjorie Keller

Marjorie Keller (b. 1950, Yorktown, NY, d. 1994) was an influential filmmaker, author, activist, and scholar. After being expelled from Tufts for participating in a protest, Keller finished her coursework at Art Institute of Chicago, and received her Master's and Doctorate in Cinema Studies at NYU. Keller was a professor of filmmaking and film history at the University of Rhode Island, Sarah Lawrence, and Massachusetts College of the Arts. She produced a substantial body of writings, as well as notes towards a proposed study of women's experimental cinema that would have charted a trajectory from pioneers like Germaine Dulac, Maya Deren, and Carolee Schneemann through to a younger generation represented by Peggy Ahwesh, Su Friedrich, and Leslie Thornton, among others. She was married to P. Adams Sitney (b. 1944; New Haven, CT), a historian of American avant-garde cinema.

In addition to her achievements as an artist and critic, Keller played a crucial role in the Collective for Living Cinema, serving on its board of directors and editing the Collective's publications *Idiolects* and *Motion Picture*. She engaged in the evolving debates around feminism, film, and the avant-garde that ran from the 70s through the 90s, vigorously defending a tradition of highly personal, formally rigorous work that some had rejected as irredeemably masculinist, while at the same time subjecting that tradition to a nuanced critique through her own scholarship and filmmaking. She transformed her subject matter—a birth, a wedding—from the stuff of home movies to an adventure in perception. Yet she forgoes the self-mythologizing of her predecessor, offering a more earthbound, though no less poetic, take on the subjective nature of memory. Her films are both at once lyrical and anti-romantic, rendering their subjects through radically nonlinear editing and complex experiments in sound-image correspondence. Though highly skeptical of the ways in which feminist film studies had, ironically, come to ignore some of the considerable accomplishments by women in the American avant-garde, Keller was nevertheless one of the key figures of her era to synthesize theory and practice at the most advanced level.

Josh Mannis

Josh Mannis (b. 1976, Boston, MA) works in a range of media such as drawing, sculpture, clothing, and video to explore figuration, sociality, work, and the ethics of presentation. Synthesizing sources as wide ranging as expressionist printmaking, optical art, and fetish comics, Mannis creates intense, engrossing and dynamic imagery with features unknown allegorical significances and deliberate distractions from the obvious focus of the picture. He has exhibited at institutions including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, FL; and the Tate Modern, London, UK.

Anna Mayer

Anna Mayer's (b. 1974, Macomb, IL) work is a sculptural and social exploration of what it means to become embodied in relation to others while acknowledging the importance of individual agency. She often employs clay, metal, language, and fire in different states (raw, liquid, vitrified, torqued) to model shifts in consciousness. In addition to her solo practice, Mayer works with Jemima Wyman as part of the collaborative duo CamLab. Mayer's work has been exhibited at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Glasgow International, Glasgow, UK; and Klaus Von Nichtssagend, New York, NY.

Paul Pescador

Paul Pescador (b. 1983, Indio, CA) uses cheap, colorful objects from the 99 cent store, patterned fabrics, and backdrops to produce abstract narratives that reconstruct his personal experiences: ranging from banal conversations and quarrels to more serious trauma and injury. Short personal dramas are heightened in recording as they take the form of animated videos, live performances, and still photography where linear storytelling is replaced by visual juxtapositions that become about the relationship of the personal experience to representation in an artwork. Pescador's work has been exhibited at the University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA; the REDCAT theater at California Institute for the Arts, Los Angeles, CA; and the University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA.

Kartemquin Films

Kartemquin Films/Gordon Quinn's (b. 1942; Washington, DC) films tell the stories of underrepresented individuals and communities through honest, documentary narratives, provoking viewers to reconsider issues of race, class, and poverty. Shooting in the Cinéma vérité tradition, Quinn's films delve deep into communities through direct interaction and pointed conversations with the subjects of his films. Quinn has produced or directed over 30 films including *Hoop Dreams* (1994), *Vietnam, Long Time Coming* (1998), *Prisoner of her Past* (2010), and *Life Itself* (2014).

Vincent Ramos

Vincent Ramos (b. 1973, Santa Monica, CA) combines various elements of drawing, installation, and performance to create a dialogue that simultaneously converses with the past and present. Drawing from his personal experiences of collecting, archiving, and research, Ramos' recent work has centered around fusing certain strains of popular culture with specific historical events, to reinterpret notions of memory, time, and place within the social, cultural, and political arenas of American society. His work has been exhibited at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; the Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA; and the 18th Street Art Center, Los Angeles, CA.

Carolee Schneemann

Carolee Schneemann (b. 1939, Fox Chase, PA) uses her body to examine the role of female sensuality in connection to the possibilities of political and personal liberation from predominantly oppressive social and aesthetic conventions. Drawing on the expressive possibilities of film, performance, photography, and installation, among other media, she has explored themes of generation and goddess imagery, sexuality, and everyday erotics, as well as personal biography and loss. Schneemann's works have been shown at institutions such as the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, FR; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY.

Jennifer West

Jennifer West (b. 1966, Topanga, CA) manipulates film celluloid to a level of performance as she douses film emulsion with perfume, Jack Daniels, or pepper spray, rubbed with Jimson Weed Trumpet flowers, dripped and splattered with nail polish, or sprayed with Lavender Mist air freshener. Drawing heavily from pop-culture and folklore for material, West's work celebrates the beauty of chance and happenstance. While her imagery and narratives can oftentimes be enigmatic, her use of titling and installation lends the viewer an entry point in which to discover context and meaning. West's work has been exhibited at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR; and the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA, among others.