

Falke Pisano: Disordered Bodies Fractured Minds (Private M., Patient A. & Traveller H.)

Private View: Thursday 13 September

Exhibition: 14 September - 21 October 2012

Gallery open: Wednesday - Sunday 12 - 6 pm

Hollybush Gardens is delighted to present *Disordered Bodies Fractured Minds (Private M., Patient A. & Traveller H.)*, an exhibition by Falke Pisano, and her second solo show at the gallery.

Falke Pisano is known for her organised series of works such as *Figures of Speech* (2005-2010). *Disordered Bodies Fractured Minds (Private M., Patient A. & Traveller H.)* is part of a new project with the overarching title *The Body in Crisis*. In broad terms this series sees Pisano explore how in the course of history representation has helped us perceive the constant state of crisis the body finds itself in, owing to political and socio-economic change. Following the maxim that “the state of emergency we live in is the rule” (W. Benjamin), Pisano centres her analysis on two things: First, the historical and continuous reiteration of the human body finding itself in moments of crisis, and thus exposing the changing political, social and economic structures that have an impact on the bare condition of human (self-) cognition. Second, Pisano’s propositions formulate an inquiry into the formal possibilities to represent the body in crisis, in the realm of art. Drawing on these critical movements of de- and re-territorialisation of the body and its representation along history, she maps the challenge of affirming that ‘distance’ and ‘repetition’ are as such constitutional for the logic of representation and semiosis in culture. In this sense Pisano comprehensibly follows up her work from the *Figures of Speech* cycle, adding to it layers of human figuration.

Disordered Bodies Fractured Minds (Private M., Patient A. & Traveller H.) consists of a video diptych of the same name, a video and a series of prints entitled *Body in Crisis*. *Disordered Bodies Fractured Minds (Private M., Patient A. & Traveller H.)* is based on three text sources that originate in three different conditions of mental and physical disintegration: a selection of texts by Antonin Artaud, Henri Michaux’s writings whilst under the influence of the hallucinogenic substance Mescaline, and the clinical report by Major Andrew F. Hurst on the patient Private P. Meek, a British sergeant with Shell Shock from World War I. Animation footage based on the drawings of George Grosz and Otto Dix and historical footage contribute to the visual narrative in the video work.

“I still have the use of my limbs (but for how long), but I have long since ceased to be in control of my mind [...]” wrote Antonin Artaud in 1925. The writer, actor and poet’s mental and physical suffering would constitute, feed and energize his extensive production until his death in 1948. The psychological materialism that emanates from his writing, can also be found in the case description of Private P. Meek, whose psychological breakdown whilst under heavy attack in France, had resulted in an almost complete physical paralysis and loss of speech and memory by the time he came under the care of Major Hurst. Whilst Artaud not only reproduced his inner agony, he also gave a systemized positive version of it. For Private Meek an image of his suffering was formed by others and written up in medical history, used by Hurst to reflect the success of his treatment methods. The third position is that of the younger Henri Michaux, who did not fight in either World War, but started to experiment with Mescaline in the 50s. Michaux’s writing is an account of sensations, intensities and durations - an experience of borders breaking down within himself. Words and images appear and violently dissolve. He goes through moments of terrible fear, destruction and madness. Although he uses language as a vehicle to arrive in a zone in which meaning disappears, his voice in the final text *Miserable Miracle* remains very much one. He wrote: “To enjoy drugs one has to enjoy being a subject”.

Falke Pisano lives and works in Berlin. Forthcoming shows include *Beyond Imagination* Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, September 2012, the Amsterdam Pavilion, Shanghai Biennale, and a solo exhibition at Cologne Kunstverein in June 2013. Recent shows include: *Surplus Authors* (with Ana Roldán) Witte de With, Rotterdam, *Performing Abstraction* Luciana Brito Galeria, São Paulo, *Falke Pisano: The Body in Crisis* De Vleeshal, Middelburg, *The Body in Crisis (Housing, Treating and Depicting)* (performance), Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid, *Abstract Possible: The Stockholm Synergies* curated by Maria Lind, Tensta Konsthall, Spånga, Sweden. She participated in 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009 curated by Daniel Birmbaum and Yokohama Triennale 2008.

In the publication *Figures of Speech* Pisano brings together her work focusing on the act of speech in relation to different forms of agency in artistic production. Designed and co-edited by Will Holder, published by JRP-Ringier, Christoph Keller Editions, 2010

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