

SPRÜTH MAGERS

David Lamelas

29/01/2016 - 02/04/2016

David Lamelas has been an iconic figure in conceptual art for over fifty years. In the 1960s and 1970s, his early experiments in structuralist film and media installations evolved an on-going exploration of a number of core conceptualist concerns. For his fourth solo show with Sprüth Magers, he brings together a range of important film and sculptural works dating from 1966 to 1993 that thrive with antagonisms of space and language, the limit of art's temporality, as well as its potential for providing new models of knowledge and self-awareness. In addition, a thoughtful reconsideration of his 1970s 'Reading Films' is presented in a new multimedia installation, *Mon Amour* (2014).

This recent installation is exhibited in the first room. The left and right-hand walls bear a series of charcoal drawings whilst a projector screen stands at the far end. It features a filmed view of a screenplay. As the film steadily scrolls through the blurred text, only the words *Elle* (her) and *Lui* (him) are legible within the vague outline of a dialogue. Lamelas has seemingly reversed the developmental process of a narrative film – from work of literature, to screenplay, to cinematic form. He deconstructs the script in its original written state, obscuring its narrative function so that its meaning derives from its presentation as a purely linguistic and spatial structure. As a notion of cinematic 'reading', Lamelas transforms the way knowledge is typically perceived within an exhibition context. The single bulbs illuminating each charcoal drawing emit the soft light of a candle to evoke a hallowed atmosphere. The works are made as wall drawings on projection tissue and are created on-site by the artist. The words quote street graffiti on the subject of war and the perception of language. The viewer is left wondering whether they also refer to the concealed narrative of the screenplay.

Untitled (Falling Wall) (1993) and *Corner Piece* (1966) stage sculptural interventions within the exhibition space. *Untitled (Falling Wall)* is a colossal twenty by seven metre wall. Three layers of wooden joists and beams increasing in size are angled down from the wall to the floor preventing the wall from collapsing into the gallery space. The beams dissect the interior space into anatomical sections that disturb the holistic volume of the 'white cube'. Both sculptures evidence the artist's observation that artworks are often legitimised by the context in which they are displayed.

As the 1970s approached, many of Lamelas' conceptual pursuits came together in film. Two works in the main room, *Time As Activity Düsseldorf* (1969), and *Film 18 Paris IV. 70* (1970) demonstrate his use of the medium in experimental representations of time. *Time As Activity Düsseldorf* is the first installment in an ongoing film series from different city locations. Three-minute episodes, shot in real-time at three public locations and times of day, make up a nine-minute silent film. The slow pace in which one must view the film encourages the viewer's consciousness of his or her own spatial and temporal experience.

SPRÜTH MAGERS

In the years following the events of May '68, Lamelas was interested by the ways in which particular subjects were conflated with ideological discourse and popular culture. French writer and paragon of the *nouveau roman*, Marguerite Duras, represented for Lamelas a literary approach that was not unlike the use of language by conceptual artists. *Interview with Marguerite Duras* (1970), is a six-and-a-half minute filmed conversation between Duras and the Argentinian writer, Raul Escari, with Lamelas remaining mute behind the camera. They discuss *Détruire dit-elle* (1969), the first work Duras penned after May '68. During the interview, Lamelas took photographs of Duras every thirty seconds. Ten of these photographs accompany the film alongside handwritten texts pronouncing her words at the exact moment her picture was taken. The work constitutes Lamelas' attempt to disrupt the interview format with that of the written text. By visually isolating the author from her own ideas, Lamelas reconfigures them as spatial and linguistic constructs, not unlike the often-decontextualized phrases and statements of conceptual art. As Lamelas' exhibition begins and ends with installations concerning the reading process, Duras' famed writerly conceits of repetition and frequent flashbacks seem to accord with Lamelas' own enactments of space and time.

David Lamelas (1946, Buenos Aires) lives and works in Los Angeles, Paris and Buenos Aires. He represented Argentina at the 9th São Paulo Biennial (1967), where he received the Sao Paulo Biennial Award, as well as at the 34th Venice Biennial (1968). In 1972 he took part in Documenta 5, Kassel. Important solo presentations include the upcoming film screening at the ICA, London (2016), Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2016), MoMA, New York (2015), Kunstneres Hus, Oslo (2013), Kunstmuseum Basel (2008), Secession, Vienna (2006), Malba Museum, Buenos Aires (2006), Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City (2005), Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (2004), Kunstverein München, and Witte de With, Rotterdam (both 1997).

Sprüth Magers Berlin is concurrently presenting the group exhibition DREAMING MIRRORS DREAMING SCREENS curated by Johannes Fricke Waldthausen/Goodroom.

For more information and press enquiries, please contact Silvia Baltschun (sb@spruethmagers.com).

Opening reception: 28.01.2016, 6 – 9 pm.

Opening hours: Tue – Sat, 11 am – 6 pm