

O powerful western fallen star!
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappear'd—O the black murk that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.
—Walt Whitman, *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*

This is the first exhibition for Israel Lund in New York in three years, and the first for Amy Granat in six years. The work is all new.

The exhibition develops along two axes: one, a dialogue between the two artists, a set of relays, analogies through which their practices illuminate each other, and, two, a sustained series of wide-ranging reversals, which develop an allegory of the image in a time when image and politics have been intertwined with obvious urgency.

Lund and Granat share obvious affinities: Both are rigorous structuralists who systemically examine the limits and nature of their chosen media (painting in Lund's case; photography video and film in Granat's). Each asks: *What is an image?* What is the nature of images—and what, if anything, distinguishes them from (mere) information? How to understand the paradox of their presence, which is based on absence? What is the nature of their circulation, in this age of their increasing pervasiveness? Who controls and creates them—and to what end?

Granat's video, *Ripple*, is reverse-projected onto a curtain. The video is a portrait in three parts: churches, courthouses, and canyons. This video is described by Granat as a counterpart to her earlier three-channel film *Cars, Trees, Houses, Beaches*, which was shot from 2008-2010, at a moment of nation-wide optimism and excitement. *Cars, Trees, Houses, Beaches* is a re-mapping of westward expansion: modernist homes, muscle cars, and Hawaiian beaches. It is a meditation on the American Dream. Eight years later, Granat returns to the subject but reverses the procedures and meaning of her earlier work. If *Cars, Trees, Houses, Beaches* was a film of morning—of a hopeful sun newly rising at dawn—*Ripple* is, conversely, a film of mourning. Granat manually unwound and rewound the film while shooting, so that the images overlap and diminish each other, toward near obscurity.

The reversal is both structural (and there are many such links and reversals, of all kinds, throughout the exhibition) and thematic, and argues, importantly, that the the medium cannot be divorced from the message. Rather, meaning must be sought in the relationship between them.

Like the writers of the French Oulipo group, Granat and Lund find lyricism and poetry not despite but precisely *because* of the strict limitations they place upon themselves. The greater the limitation (and one thinks here of Georges Perec, or *On Karawa*), paradoxically, the potential for aesthetic result. Lund's inquiry has, from the start, necessitated a strict set of proportions and parameters. For example, Lund's paintings are derived from his initial readymade gesture of using the dimensions of an 8.5 x 11" piece of paper; the large-format works are always exactly 8 times this initial move. Likewise, he applies layers of screen printing ink, always in the same order: yellow, magenta, cyan (CMYK). Every painting has followed those structures, with no exception. But *Untitled* [located on the back wall] reverses, for the first time, this order. Its earthy (and un-earthly) luminosity derives (like the grey evening glow of *Ripple's* unwound and rewound film) from this sudden reversal.

From the start of his career, Lund has insisted that the paintings are simply about, and engaged with, the question of *information*: the material information that makes painting an object, the transmission of digital information as pixel and the accumulation of colored pixels as beautiful static (and, as per Granat's *ILDH* (2017), as white noise), as the symbolic information of art history, whose icons (Kippenberger, Buren, Rauschenberg, Cage) he has hacked, inserted, and degraded in previous bodies of work. Both artists have always moved between abstraction and appropriation, and sought to demonstrate that all images, especially when circulated through means of electronic reproduction, are automatically abstract, while even the "purest" abstraction is always a kind of image.

If Granat's *Ripple* revisits the American Dream as nighttime elegy, Lund's *Untitled (Severed Head)*, a four-part construction, presents a cryptic image of symbolic violence while at the same time purposefully withholding any clues as to its origin or interpretation. Is this an image of tragedy? Or a satire? A pun on "hacker" aesthetics? An art-historical clue, pointing to Caravaggio and the Medusa-effect built into the history of easel painting, which, according to Michael Fried, was "severed" from its medieval architectural origins in early modernity? These questions, posed by this image, dissolve also into the permanent 'abstraction' of pixelated surfaces, like a river circulating, endlessly, back into the primal digital sea.

Or, as per John May in "Everything is Already an Image" (Log 40):

We should find ways of *becoming image* – of establishing meaningful expression within imaging itself, all the while acknowledging that our images no longer mean anything at all. The central paradox of our contemporary telematic consciousness: as imaging becomes the primary way in which we give meaning to our lives, the specific content of each individual image becomes less meaningful, bending towards meaninglessness. The content of an image (its "meaning") is an automated ratio between signal and noise. Any truly new telematic politics will no longer be a politics of the *content* of images but of the structure, composition, capacities, and limitations of imaging itself.

Israel Lund (b. 1980, Bells Falls, VT) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include Lumber Room, Portland, OR (2016-17); Base Arte Contemporanea Odierna (BACO) in collaboration with Galleria d'Arte Moderna Contemporanea di Bergamo (GAMeC) (2016); White Flag Projects, St. Louis (2015); The Power Station, Dallas (2015); David Lewis, New York (2014), among others. Public Collections include: Base Arte Contemporanea Odierna (BACO), Bergamo, Italy; Bieneke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale, New Haven CT; Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME; Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, OH; Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH; Dallas Museum of Art, TX; Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA; MoMA Library, New York, NY; Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, AZ; Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, NJ; UBS Art Collection, Zürich, Switzerland.

Amy Granat (b. 1976, St. Louis, MO) lives and works in St. Louis. She is currently the subject of a solo exhibition at The Saint Louis Art Museum. Granat's films and photographs have been exhibited at Centre Pompidou, Paris (2014); The Kitchen, NY (2010); The New Museum, NY (2010); David Roberts Art Foundation, London (2010); Rose Art Museum, Massachusetts (2010); The Drawing Center, NY (2008); Basis, Frankfurt (2008); the 2008 Whitney Biennial, NY (2008); Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2008); White Columns, NY (2007); Kunsthalle Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland (2007); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2007); Le Comfort Modern, Poitiers (2007); MoMA PS1 Center for Contemporary Art, NY (2006); The Sculpture Center, NY (2005), among many others. Permanent collections include the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; The Museum of Modern Art, NY; Fond National d'Art Contemporain, France; and Musee Des Beaux-Arts, La-Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland among others. In 2015 she co-founded the art space Parapet Real Humans with Annina Herzer.