

Sue Tompkins

'Country Grammar'

A film by Luke Fowler

The Modern Institute, Aird's Lane

30 September - 4 November 2017

Sue Tompkins' fifth exhibition at The Modern Institute, within the Aird's Lane gallery space presents a new film by Luke Fowler and an installation of new paintings. In the artists' second collaboration, Fowler's film focuses on Tompkins' performance 'Country Grammar' created in 2003, one of her earliest pieces performed within a gallery context.

Tompkins' performance works begin from her texts - a stream of notes - fragments of signs, observations, seen and heard. These discreet texts are then collated, assembled and edited into longer performances, which are often re-edited and adapted within each performed iteration. There are overlaps between Fowler and Tompkins' practice, where Fowler collects images and sounds from his daily life with a handheld 16mm camera, and weaves them together to create a complex network of film units.

The film begins with the recording of Tompkins performing at Chem19 Recording Studio. Fowler's main intent was to record Tompkins from a variety of aural and visual perspectives - using a range of different microphones - from a Neumann U87 condenser mic to a powder coated pink STC handheld dynamic mic. These two microphones are the primary instruments used in the recording and were panned hard left and right - so that when Tompkins goes off axis on the stationary U87 it is picked up by the handheld STC and vice versa- creating a wide sound-stage that articulates the dynamism of Tompkins' performance. This close-mic'd recording is supplemented by the addition of omni-directional room mics' and latterly field recordings - which add a further depth to the recording.

The camera weaves in and around Tompkins' performance - filming from a multitude of perspectives, employing rhythmic pans, tilts and opaque or reflective screens. These distorted views, combined with non-synchronised images of the performer depart from a 70s 'direct cinema' approach to filming musicians. Instead, this methodology reflects a recursive and disjunctive approach to filmmaking which embraces the unique flaws and idiosyncrasies of the medium. After the opening section, which deals with performance as a kind of ritual, the film widens its view to locations outside of the studio. The repetition of filmed actions (picking books from a shelf, re-arranging the contents of a fridge) suggest a searching for a threshold between the filmed image and Tompkins' own spoken word acts. In these sequences the role of performer and director are questioned. Taking cues from the performers' hypnotic - yet concrete play with language - the film reacts by creating a metaphoric, symbiotic language - where an open-ended approach to montage transcends both reductive imagery and straight documentation.

Your way or nothing at all

This is a reminisce

This is a reminisce

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Tompkins' exhibition will extend into the adjacent Brick Space gallery with a body of new paintings and a live performance of a version of 'Pass the Drones' (2017). The opening of this part of the exhibition and the performance will take place on Tuesday 17th October, 6-8pm. Performance commencing at 7pm.

Sue Tompkins (b. 1971, Leighton Buzzard; Lives and works in Glasgow) graduated from The Glasgow School of Art in 1994. Tompkins received the Paul Hamlyn Award in 2011. Solo exhibitions and performances include: 'Expressions', The Modern Institute, (2013); 'Skype Won't Do', Diana Stigter, Amsterdam, (2013); 'SEA DEEP', Galerie Micky Schubert, Berlin (2012); 'Hallo Welcome to Keith Street', (Performance Presented by Art Basel Miami Beach and Creative Time In Partnership with Tramway), Miami Beach, USA (2010); 'Grease: Transfer', Spike Island, Bristol (live performance; with Hayley Tompkins) (2007). She has also exhibited widely in numerous group exhibitions, notably: 'Film and performance: The Voice Is A Language', Tate Modern, London (2012) 'British Art Show 7: In The Days Of The Comet', Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow (2011); 'São Paulo Biennale', Sao Paulo Biennale, Sao Paolo (2010); 'HEAVEN', Athens Biennale, Athens, Greece (2009); 'Poor. Old. Tired. Horse', ICA, London (2009); 'Word Event', Kunsthalle Basel, Basel (2008).

Luke Fowler (b. 1978, Glasgow; Lives and works in Glasgow) graduated from Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art in 2000. He was nominated for The Turner Prize in 2012, and received the inaugural Derek Jarman Award in 2008. In 2014, Fowler was one of the recipients of Artists and Archives: Artists' Moving Image, a unique residency programme based at BBC Scotland. In 2014, MACK published Fowler's first monograph of his Photo Archive body of work.

Recent performances and screenings include: Tectonics Festival, Glasgow (2017); GES-2, Moscow, Russia (2017); Sonic Acts Festival, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2017); Tate Liverpool, Liverpool (2017). Selected solo exhibitions include those at: Neubauer Collegium for Culture & Society at The University of Chicago (2016), The Modern Institute, Aird's Lane, Glasgow (2015); The Hepworth, Wakefield (2012); Inverleith House, Edinburgh (2012); CCS Bard Galleries, New York (2011); and Serpentine Gallery, London (2009).

Film Credits -

Luke Fowler

Country Grammar (with Sue Tompkins), 2017

16mm film transferred to digital

18mins

Written and Performed by Sue Tompkins

Direction, Camera, Sound, Editing by Luke Fowler

Vocal Recording engineered by Derek O'Neil at Chem 19

Location Recordings and Sound Design by Luke Fowler

Film Processing and Transfers by Kodak Film Lab, UK

Grading by Max Horton at Onsite

Audio Mastered by James Savage at Hottrax Studio