

Press Release

Yael Bartana

TRUE FINN - TOSI SUOMALAINEN

06.09 – 18.10.2014



Yael Bartana, *True Finn – Tosi suomalainen (still)*, 2014

Annet Gelink Gallery is pleased to present *True Finn – Tosi suomalainen*, Yael Bartana's (1970, Kfar-Yehezkel, Israel) fifth solo show at the gallery. Based around Bartana's newest video work, *True Finn – Tosi suomalainen* (2014), explores themes often dealt with in Bartana's work: the issues surrounding national or cultural identities and the concepts of homeland and belonging. This exhibition also marks the premiere of the film outside of Finland, where it was first shown as the IHME Project of

the 2014 IHME Contemporary Art festival. Bartana was invited by the Pro Arte Foundation, which runs the festival, to create the film as a temporary work of art in the public space. To suit the requirements of the project, Bartana conceived the work as a reality T.V. series, whilst still using a more filmic approach. As such, the work also marks a departure from the style of her previous video works.

'True Finn' is a loose translation of the name of the rightwing Finnish political party Perussuomalaiset, which in recent years has grown to become the third largest political party in Finland. For *True Finn – Tosi suomalainen* (2014) Bartana asked eight Finnish volunteers, of differing cultural, religious and political backgrounds, to live together for one week in an effort to create a utopian moment. They were assigned an array of tasks that deal with the issues forming modern-day Finnish national identity. These tasks and the everyday routines and discussions between the cohabitants form the basis of the film and give insight into how each of the eight individuals feel both part and apart of the larger Finnish society. Interspersing the modern reality of Finnish nationality with more traditional, propagandistic depictions, *True Finn – Tosi suomalainen* ultimately asks what it means to be Finnish today and how that changes depending on who is answering the question.

At the entrance of the show a neon work is on view. The text 'Black Stars Shed No Light' that forms the neon also forms the opening line of a new Finnish anthem made by the eight participants, to which each of the eight individuals contributed a sentence. Created to better suit and reflect Finland's current society, this new anthem features as a running thread throughout the film, as an emblem of the vision of Finland being presented. Bartana offers it as a both counterpoint and reversal of rightwing Finnish nationalism.

True Finn – Tosi suomalainen asks us to reflect not just on Finnish society, but the new (European) tradition of multiculturalism. Who is a true Finn nowadays? Are some truer Finns than others? What remains of national identity when who we are, as nations, changes? And what does this identity then become?

Known for her films, photographs and installations, **Bartana's** work has been shown in numerous leading museums and biennials: 31st Sao Paulo Biennial (2014), 19th Biennial of Sydney, PAMM (2013) Walker Art Center (2013), Carnegie International (2013), Van Abbemuseum (2012), Secession Vienna (2012), 7th Berlin Biennale (2012); 54th Venice Biennale (Polish Pavilion, 2011).

Her work is part of the collection of a.o.: van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven, NL); Centre Pompidou (Paris, FR); Gemeentemuseum Den Haag (The Hague, NL); Guggenheim Museum (New York, US); The Jewish Museum (New York, US); Kadist (Paris, FR); Museum Boijmans van Beuningen (Rotterdam, NL); Museum of Modern Art (New York, US); Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (Amsterdam, NL); Tate Modern (London, UK); Tel Aviv Museum of Art (Tel Aviv, IL); Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, US).

The Bakery

AMSTERDAM DRAWING EXTENDED

Ed van der Elsken, Meiro Koizumi, David Maljkovic, Antonis Pittas

06.09 – 18.10. 2014



Meiro Koizumi, *Untitled* (still), 2000

In the Bakery, Annet Gelink Gallery is proud to present the group exhibition *Amsterdam Drawing Extended*. The exhibition forms an expansion of our participation in this year's Amsterdam Drawing art fair. Titled 'Amsterdam Drawing' the fair's mission is to show and promote works on paper. This distinction, however, raises the question of how we define what makes a drawing and what sets it apart from other forms of artistic expression. All the works on show in *Amsterdam Drawing Extended* approach the medium of drawing in differing ways.

Ed van der Elsken's and Meiro Koizumi's works both commit to film depictions of more conventional drawings, presenting them as documentations of culture and artistic method. The Ed van der Elsken's photographs on view are part of his 1958 publication *Bagara*, which documents the cultures and people he came across during his travels through Central Africa. Van der Elsken would often take photographs of drawings as part of his photography books, as he did with Vali Meyers' drawings in *Love on the Left Bank*. As such these photographs are not a mere documentation of the drawings, but form part of the wider narrative set out in the photography books. In so doing, they become works in themselves, both drawing and photograph. Drawing is a central element of Meiro Koizumi's artistic practice. Koizumi approaches the act of drawing as a means to uncover hidden emotional and spiritual motifs that lie behind what is visible, making it inextricably linked to his entire oeuvre. In *Untitled* we see the artists hysterically whistling the tune of *Auld Lang Syne* (commonly used in graduation ceremonies in Japan), whilst rubbing pencils across a board to the rhythm of the song. The work conveys a sense of aggression and energy, with the act of drawing becoming a vehicle for the overall outcome of the video work.

The works on display by David Maljkovic and Antonis Pittas on the other hand challenge our perceptions of what makes a drawing. Maljkovic uses elements traditionally found in painting to create his *Studio* drawings. Formed on canvas, as opposed to paper, the viewer is asked to contemplate the process of creating art. Are these drawings to which paint has been added or has the process taken place in the opposite direction? Pittas goes for the inverse approach, using ephemeral graphite on walls, floors and marble sculptures to place texts on otherwise monumental and static objects. Where for Maljkovic drawing is a catalyst for inwardly exploring the workings of art, Pittas employs it as a means to connect art to the wider world.

Amsterdam Drawing Extended thus shows how drawing is more than simply "works on paper". As one of the most fundamental of artistic practices, restricting its definition means restricting its uses. When is a drawing thus not a drawing?.