

OPEN FOR MAINTENANCE II / WE ARE STILL ALIVE II

Rebecca Shanahan - September 10 – October 3

Public Programs presented as a part of Feminist September at Verge Gallery:

Saturday September 12, 1-3pm - Panel Discussion: 'XenoFeminism, CyberFeminism and EcoFeminism' with Amy Ireland, Virginia Barrett, Prue Gibson and Jacqueline Drinkall

Saturday September 19, 4-6pm - Female Trailblazers: a social networking event.

Saturday September 26, 12-3pm - Feminist Fronts: Art Crit/ panel discussion led by Aggregate.

Saturday October 3, 1-3pm - Double Vision: curated by Del Lumanta. Knitted Abyss, James Brown and Zoe Mahoney ft. Laurence Williams.

This work traces actions that the artist undertook and documented earlier this year. In March 2015 'Open For Maintenance' and 'We Are Still Alive' offered services and goods to visitors to SCA Galleries, Rozelle. Both works used the gallery as a studio space for production as well as a white cube for presentation. In 'Open for Maintenance', the artist mended clothes in the gallery provided by visitors, and in 'We Are Still Alive' the artist baked bread daily and brought it to the gallery. The works' intentions (and titles) derived from some Conceptual practices, specifically artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles' 'maintenance art' and On Kawara's various daily iterations of existence. Contextualising art as service or experience rather than goods, the actions also followed principles of unconditional giving and volunteering.

The images in 'Open For Maintenance II' and 'We Are Still Alive II' come from photographs and security footage edited from extensive documentation of these earlier actions. They reflect on possible relationships between the Conceptual convention of deadpan documentation of artwork actions, and the current online ecology of constant experience documentation and sharing. In combining still and moving imagery and foregrounding aftermath as a primary subject, the works also consider the qualities of past-ness and present-ness and the value of a document that records an experience, in the context of contemporary networked photography cultures that have rendered obsolete Roland Barthes' that-has-been quality once intrinsic to photographs. The works is also informed by an ongoing interest in absence, transience and the ephemeral, particularly the Japanese concepts mu, ma and mono no aware. These identify and articulate the often-inchoate qualities of emptiness or nothingness through space and time that are nonetheless imbued with weight and meaning, and a heightened, affective consciousness of time passing. Here new timeframes have been created from weeks of surveilling condensed down to minutes, and from photographs of mended clothes, both via the garments which have been given extended life and via before-and-after process documentation.

VERGE GALLERY



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