

MIT List Visual Arts Center

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An Inventory of Shimmers: Objects of Intimacy in Contemporary Art

Hayden and Reference Galleries

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Opening Reception: Thursday, May 18, 6-8 PM

(April 5, 2017) Cambridge, MA—*An Inventory of Shimmers: Objects of Intimacy in Contemporary Art*, a group exhibition curated by Henriette Huldish, brings together works by Andrea Büttner, Sophie Calle, Alejandro Cesarco, Jason Dodge, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Antonia Hirsch, Jill Magid, Park McArthur, Lisa Tan, Erika Vogt, Susanne M. Winterling, and Anicka Yi. The exhibition considers our entangled, intimate relations with and through objects. Originally inspired by ideas of affect, it borrows its title from French philosopher Roland Barthes's *The Neutral*, in which he stated that “the inventory of shimmers is of nuances, of states, of changes . . .” The works included variously act as vehicles for affective engagement or transactions of desire between people, or are directly engaged with actions of care, trust, and love. Many objects in the exhibition carry the traces of things we can't see but have to trust, intuit, or perceive in ways that are not related to vision or hearing.

Artists in the show engage with modes of address and content that are tethered to affect, emotion, or feeling yet at the same eschew sentimentality and expressivity. Felix Gonzalez-Torres's “Untitled” (*Lover Boy*), comprised of light blue curtains installed in front of a window, commemorates his own deceased lover, as well as others lost to AIDS. Here and throughout his work, the artist's formal economy and conceptual rigor conceal depths of desire, anger, and loss.

Park McArthur's collection of objects reminds us that medical supplies (catheters, gloves), often considered cold and sterile, are employed in the service of intrapersonal care. Objects likewise mediate intimate exchanges in Andrea Büttner's video *Little Things*, which depicts an order of Carmelite nuns proudly sharing their crafts within their closed community. Antonia Hirsch's *Object T* addresses ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response)—a pleasant, tingling sensation that YouTubers aim to reproduce by listening to audio recordings of whispering or sounds made with inanimate objects.

Trust is an integral component of intimacy highlighted in the exhibition. In Alejandro Cesarco's *Fragile Images That Keep Producing Death While Attempting to Preserve Life: Flowers found in crime scenes_001-004*, the viewer has to take the artist's word for the images' titular sources, no evidence is



provided. Sophie Calle's *Secrets* is comprised of two safes collected by a couple; both individuals lock away a secret the other doesn't know. Exchanges of trust and promises occurs between the artist, the couple, and the viewers. Jason Dodge's *Anyone* consists of stacks of hotel sheets installed throughout the gallery and exchanged weekly by a laundry service. The items are at once uncomfortably intimate, having presumably been slept on by many different people, and completely anonymous at the same time.

Erika Vogt's moving image installation *Secret Traveler Navigator* unfolds like a magic trick or a ritual, as an elliptical narrative in voice-over accompanies a succession of figures in silhouette handling mysterious objects. In her epistolary plea to the archivist of the modernist architect Luis Barragán, Jill Magid has cast herself a jealous third to their exclusive love.

Some works in the exhibition are concerned with shifting demarcations between the human and inhuman, as well as the limits of empathy. Anicka Yi's series of wall works cast in silicone from animal skin calls to mind *goosebumps*—an embodied affective response that is not unique to humans. The dinoflagellate in Susanne M. Winterling's *Vertex (Metabolic)* has neither eyes nor a central nervous system, raising questions about nonhuman affect. Winterling cites physicist-cum-philosopher Karen Barad, who asks what it means for a molecule to get excited—considering excitement broadly as an intensity of force that originates with an object.

Parsing the links between such formless entities as water, data, pixels, and emotions, Lisa Tan's video installation *Waves*, by contrast, attempts to wrestle with a paradox that haunts theories of affect and this exhibition alike: How do you describe or picture something that is not linguistic and that lurks at the edge of consciousness?

An Inventory of Shimmers: Objects of Intimacy in Contemporary Art is curated by Henriette Huldish, Curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center. The exhibition will be accompanied by a 96-page fully illustrated catalogue published by Prestel/DelMonico in association with the MIT List Visual Arts Center. Edited by Henriette Huldish, the catalogue features essay contributions by Eugenie Brinkema, Associate Professor of Literature at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Johanna Burton, Director and Curator of Education and Public Engagement at the New Museum; and Emily Watlington, Curatorial Research Assistant, MIT List Visual Arts Center and graduate student in MIT's History Theory and Criticism of Art and Architecture Program.

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Inventory of Shimmers: Objects of Intimacy in Contemporary Art

Artist Biographies

Andrea Büttner (b. 1972, Germany; lives and works in London and Frankfurt am Main, Germany)—Büttner's solo exhibitions include *Beggars and iPhones* (2016) at Kunsthalle Wien; *Andrea Büttner* (2015) at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and *The Poverty of Riches* (2011) at Whitechapel Gallery, London. Her work has been included in group exhibitions such as *Documenta 13* (2012); *Individual Stories: Sammeln als Porträt und Methodologie* (2015) at Kunsthalle Wien, Austria; and *A Prosu(u)mer Reader* (2015) at Contemporary Art Museum Estonia, Tallinn.

Sophie Calle (b. 1943, France; lives and works in Malakoff, France)—Calle's solo exhibitions include *Last Seen* (2013) at Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston; *Prenez soin de vous* (2007) in the French Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale; and *M'as-tu vue* (2003) at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Her work has been included in group exhibitions such as *The Memory of Time* (2015) at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.; *WITNESS* (2016) at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and *Manifesta 11* (2016).

Alejandro Cesarco (b. 1975, Uruguay; lives and works in New York)—Cesarco's solo exhibitions include *A Portrait, a Story, and an Ending* (2013) at Kunsthalle Zürich; *Baloise Kunst Preis 2012* (2012) at Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna; and *A Common Ground* (2011) in the Uruguay Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale. His work has been included in group exhibitions such as *Under the Same Sun: Art from Latin America Today* (2014) at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; *New Ways of Doing Nothing* (2014) at Kunsthalle Wien, Austria; and the 30th Bienal Internacional de São Paulo (2012).

Jason Dodge (b. 1969, United States; lives and works in Berlin)—Dodge is an artist, as well as publisher and editor of the poetry press fivehundred places.

Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1957–1996, United States, b. Cuba)—Gonzalez-Torres's solo exhibitions include *Felix Gonzalez-Torres: Specific Objects Without Specific Form* (2010–11) at WIELS, Brussels; *Felix Gonzalez-Torres: America* (2007) in the U.S. Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale; and *Felix Gonzalez-Torres: Traveling* (1994) at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and the Renaissance Society, Chicago. His work has been included in group exhibitions such as *America Is Hard to See* (2015) at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; *Getting Emotional* (2005) at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; and *A Day Without Art* (1996) at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

Antonia Hirsch (b. 1968, Germany; lives and works in Berlin)—Hirsch's solo exhibitions include *Negative Space* (2014–15) at Gallery TPW, Toronto, and Simon Fraser University Galleries, Vancouver, and *Komma* (2012) at Tramway, Glasgow. Her work has been included in group exhibitions such as *Art in the Age of . . . Planetary Computation* (2015) at Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam; *Punctum* (2014) at Salzburger Kunstverein, Austria; and *It Is What It Is* (2010) at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Jill Magid (b. 1973, United States; lives and works in New York)—Magid's solo exhibitions include *The Proposal* (2016) at Kunsthalle Sankt Gallen, Switzerland, and the San Francisco Art Institute; *A Reasonable Man in a Box* (2010) at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and *Authority to Remove* (2009) at Tate Modern, London. Her work has been included in group exhibitions such as



Electronic Superhighway (2016) at Whitechapel Gallery, London; *Manifesta 11* (2016); and *After Belonging* (2016) at the Cincinnati Art Museum, Ohio.

Park McArthur (b. 1984, United States; lives and works in New York)—McArthur's solo exhibitions include *Poly* (2016) at Chisenhale Gallery, London; *Passive Vibration Isolation* (2014) at Lars Friedrich, Berlin; and *During the month of August ESSEX STREET will be closed.* (2013) at ESSEX STREET, New York. Her work has been included in group exhibitions such as the 32nd Bienal Internacional de São Paulo (2016); *Greater New York* (2015) at MoMA PS1, New York; and *Senses of Care: Mediated Ability and Interdependence* (2014) at G@C2, University of Southern California, San Diego.

Lisa Tan (b. 1973, United States; lives and works in Stockholm)—Tan's solo exhibitions include *Notes From Underground* (2017) at Kunsthall Trondheim; *For Every Word Has Its Own Shadow* (2015) at Galleri Riis, Stockholm; and *Sunsets* (2014) at Museum of Contemporary Art, Santa Barbara. Her work has been included in group exhibitions such as *ever elusive: thirty years of transmediale* at Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2017); the 11th Shanghai Biennale (2016); and *Surround Audience*, the New Museum Triennial (2015), New York.

Erika Vogt (b. 1973, United States; lives and works in Los Angeles)—Vogt's solo exhibitions include *Eros Island: Knives Please Rise* (2016) at Overduin & Co., Los Angeles; *SPEECH MESH—Drawn OFF* (2015) at the Hepworth Wakefield, England; and *Stranger Debris Roll Roll Roll* (2013) at the New Museum, New York. Her work has been included in group exhibitions such as *Reconstructions: Recent Photographs and Video from the Met Collection* (2015) at the Metropolitan Museum, New York, and *Made in LA* (2012) at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Performa commissioned her theatrical piece *Artist Theater Program: Lava plus Knives* in 2015.

Susanne M. Winterling (b. 1970, Germany; lives and works in Berlin and Oslo)—Winterling's solo exhibitions include *The Front Room* (2009) at Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis; *The Inscrutable Surface* (2012) at Salzburger Kunstverein, Austria; and *Complicity* (2014) at Kunstverein Amsterdam. Her work has been included in group exhibitions such as *Liebe Deine Maschine* (2015) at Kunstverein Hildesheim, Germany; *A Disagreeable Object* (2012) at SculptureCenter, New York; and the Fifth Berlin Biennale (2008).

Anicka Yi (b. 1971, South Korea; lives and works in New York)—Yi's solo exhibitions include *6,070,430K of Digital Spit* (2015) at the MIT List Visual Arts Center and Kunsthalle Basel; *Jungle Stripe* (2016) at Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany; and *You Can Call Me F* (2016) at the Kitchen, New York. Her work has been included in group exhibitions such as the 11th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2016); the 12th Biennale de Lyon (2013); and *Das Ding!* (2013) at Swiss Institute / Contemporary Art, New York.

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