

3 + 1

Blackout: Curated by Antonio Grulli
Anna Sophie-Berger | Luca Bertolo
Keren Cytter | Flavio Favelli
29.06.18 – 15.09.18
Opening 19h – 22h, 29.06.18

Blackout

Of all the exhibitions that I have curated thus far *Blackout* is perhaps the one that speaks the most directly and the closest to our current historical moment. I usually try to work on projects that emerge in our time but are capable of transcending a specific temporal context, which, like any other context, will inevitably pass, often taking along with it works, shows and texts that become too attached to it, or whose sole raison d'être was the zeitgeist itself. The initial idea was to gather a set of works gravitating around the notion of censorship, but not from a political viewpoint. I was interested in all those processes in which an image, an element, an instance, a word, but also a body, undergo the negation, erasure, removal, concealment, which are often the mere annulment of an intrinsic potential. I wanted to deal with these aspects not through a process of simplification of a fact, as artists sometimes do by highlighting it through sets of instructions, but through a process of sublimating both form and content. Perhaps due to the evolution of the Internet and the new communication devices, it is as if we have been witnessing a process of normalization of censorship in the last few years. The importance given to the removal or non-publication of an image in the pre-social network era was enormous, and all who experienced it recall how there was always an intense debate over what should be censored and what should be allowed.

In recent years we have grown accustomed to the fact that many contents, for example sexual or religious in nature, are liable of being removed or excluded from the media.

However, it is as if during the construction of the exhibition the initial idea had been warped, becoming subtly subverted. Each of the works on show contains or alludes to an element (or set of elements) that undergoes a process of constriction, in which some form of violence is brought into play. To me, this is the continuation of a research on images, on art and on the artwork as potential danger, as destabilizing element capable of causing distress instead of reassurance.

It is obvious that in many cases the removed element is related to sexuality – or even, to be more precise, to the body in its 'naked' basic nature. But there is more: those processes of ambivalence between constriction, negation and desire, extent to our everyday language and the world of goods and products that have become our daily landscape.

The works of Anna-Sophie Berger (Vienna, 1989) live exactly off that mixture. The Austrian artist carries out a research related mostly to the object of everyday use, at times resorting to such languages as photography. Like in the case of the portrait (done with the assistance of a photographer friend) in which she wears but a chain around her body replacing a thong. This work inquires into the possibility, or not, of the representation and self-representation of the naked female body, but with a keen wittiness, which turns it into a sexy, powerful and striking photograph. To this are added two equally ambiguous objects, which, as usual, touch on the delicate and the playful while conveying a feeling of subtle, subterranean violence: a light coat created by the artist, which is plunged in mud and thrown against a wall to then slide down to the ground leaving a trail; and a necklace/choker made of small elements that take on the colours of a different national flag every time: on this occasion, the Italian flag was chosen.

Luca Bertolo (Milano, 1968) works consist only of paintings, some of which were anomalously produced, as the canvases are mounted on wooden poles that turn them into potential street demonstration posters. The object of these paintings is the word 'NO'. They are accompanied by a large painting representing a diamond shaped chain link fence, simultaneously a pictorial pattern and an allusion to a situation of confinement or the enclosure/demarcation of restricted areas or territories. Bertolo's presence in the exhibition is completed by one of his 'Veronicas': a painting depicting only the image of the veil on which the face of Christ should be imprinted, but which in this case merely covers the object of a monochrome canvas.

3 + 1

Keren Cytter (Tel Aviv, 1977) is present with an almost 27 minute long video in which a group of Russians, perhaps the members of a criminal organization, move within the narrow spaces of a house engaging in Theatre of the Absurd-like conversations and psychological and physical violence that involves a young woman.

Finally, Flavio Favelli (Florence, 1967) is present with a series of large collages made with pornographic posters (in which there are no traces of bodies), along with some wall pieces made from drink crates on which the artist has intervened by making alterations and drawing different logos, and a small red monochrome diptych made of chocolate wrapping paper. Favelli has also created an installation conceived specifically for this exhibition using recycled materials found in Portugal.

These are artists from different countries and generations. But above all they work on similar themes using similar approaches and despite their disparate backgrounds: Anna-Sophie Berger works on the everyday object; Luca Bertolo focuses on painting; Keren Cytter on video and writing; Flavio Favelli on sculpture and the creation of atmospheres and objects ambiguously located between design and furniture.

I would also like to draw attention to the exhibition's title, *Blackout*. The inspiration came after I saw the cover of the eponymous book by Nanni Balestrini on a shop window. A book in which, among other things, the Italian artist wrote about the premature death of singer and performer Demetrio Stratos. What piqued my interest was the use of a term that would carry with a colour and an atmosphere. In fact, I think this word is capable of condensing the image and the experience of the exhibition while alluding to a gaze that is denied but still wants to see. Hence, *Blackout*, like an endangered vision, sometimes due to an excess of accumulated energy.

Antonio Grulli 06.2018

Translation: Rui Parada Cascais 2018

3 + 1

Anna-Sophie Berger (Vienna, 1989. Lives in New York and Vienna) creates work that connects individual perception and intimate use with questions of material reality as part of socio-economic circulation and consumption. Berger has presented solo exhibitions at: MUMOK, Vienna; Kunsthaus Bregenz; 21Haus, Vienna; JTT, New York and Emanuel Layr Rome. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at: MUMOK, Vienna; S.M.AK., Ghent; Kunstverein Munich; Contemporary Art Center, Vilnius; Lodos, Mexico City; Rogaland Kunstsenter, Stavanger; Salzburger Kunstverein; 9th Berlin Biennial; Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst & Medien KM-, Graz. She is the recipient of the ars viva award 2018 and the 2017 First Kapsch Contemporary Art Prize.

Luca Bertolo (Milan, 1968. Lives in a village on the Apuan Alps, in Tuscany). Luca Bertolo has shown his works in public institutions and private galleries among which GAM, Torino; GNAM, Roma; Kettle's Yard, Cambridge; Centro Luigi Pecci, Prato; MACRO, Rome; Nomas Foundation, Rome; SpazioA, Pistoia; Arcade, London; Fondazione Prada, Milano; 176 / Zabłudowicz Collection, London; Marc Foxx, Los Angeles; uqbar, Berlin; Galerie Tatjana Pieters, Ghent; The Goma, Madrid. Since 2010 has contributed several articles to Italian art magazines. Since 2015 teaches painting at the Accademia di Belle Arti of Bologna.

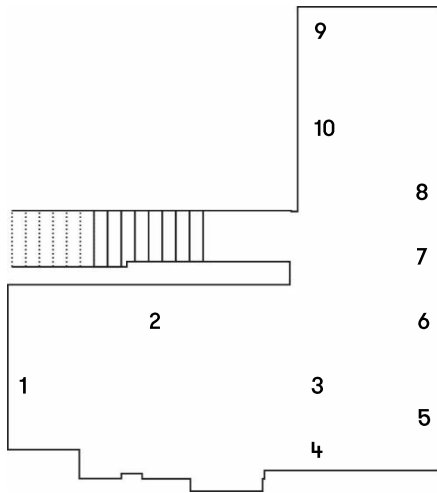
Keren Cytter (Tel Aviv, 1977. Lives in New York) creates films, video installations, and drawings that represent social realities through experimental modes of storytelling. In 2006 Cytter was awarded the prestigious Bâloise Art Prize at Art Basel. Selected exhibitions include shows at: SCHLOSS, Oslo; Pilar Corriás, London; Mathew Gallery, New York; Künstlerhaus Halle für Kunst & Medien, Graz; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen; Tate Modern Oil Tanks, London; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Portikus, Frankfurt; Kunsthalle Wien; Biennale di Venezia. In 2018 Keren Cytter is going to have two solo shows at Museion in Bolzano.

Flavio Favelli (Florence, 1967. Lives in Savigno, near Bologna). Favelli has exhibited in numerous museums, galleries, public and private spaces in Italy and abroad, such as Maison Particuliere, Bruxelles, the Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Foundation (2007) and Castello di Rivoli (2012) in Turin; the Maison Rouge in Paris (2007); the Italian Cultural Institute in Los Angeles (2004); and in two important international group exhibitions: *Italics* (Palazzo Grassi in Venice and MOCA in Chicago, 2009) and *Spazio* (MAXXI Museum in Rome, 2010). He has participated in two editions of the Venice Biennale: the 55th (2013), inside the Italian Pavilion curated by B. Pietromarchi and the 50th (2003), in the *Clandestini* section. In 2012 he was invited to the 11th Havana Biennial in Cuba.

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GALLERY 1

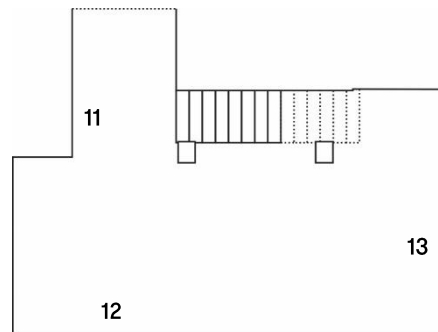


GALLERY 1

1. Anna-Sophie Berger, *Portrait*, 2018, lambda print 60 x 40 cm, ed. 1/5
2. Luca Bertolo, *Veronica 16#09*, 2016, oil on canvas 28 x 22 cm
3. Flavio Favelli, *Pink Solero*, 2018, acrylic and cardboard on wood, 141.5 x 121 x 63 cm
4. Flavio Favelli, *Red San Gregorio*, 2013, collage of praline wrappers, 43 x 38 cm each (diptych)
5. Anna-Sophie Berger, *Things are tight (Italy)*, 2017, plastic, polystyrol, elastic band, 15 x 15 cm
6. Luca Bertolo, *Sign 17#08*, 2017, acrylic on canvas, wood 191 x 35 x 4 cm
7. Luca Bertolo, *Sign 17#04*, 2017, acrylic on canvas, wood 207 x 50 x 4 cm
8. Luca Bertolo, *Sign 17#06*, 2017, acrylic on canvas, wood 183 x 35 x 4 cm
9. Anna-Sophie Berger, *mud coat (2)*, 2016, polyester, thread, mud, water, dimensions variable
10. Flavio Favelli, *Love*, 2013, collage on board, 135 x 95 cm

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GALLERY 2



GALLERY 2

11. Flavio Favelli, *Sensation rosso*, 2013, collage on board 130 x 90 cm
12. Luca Bertolo, *Untitled (Fence #02)*, 2015, oil on canvas 120 x 100 cm
13. Keren Cytter, *Object*, 2017, digital video, colour, sound 27:01 mins, Ed. of 5 + 2AP

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