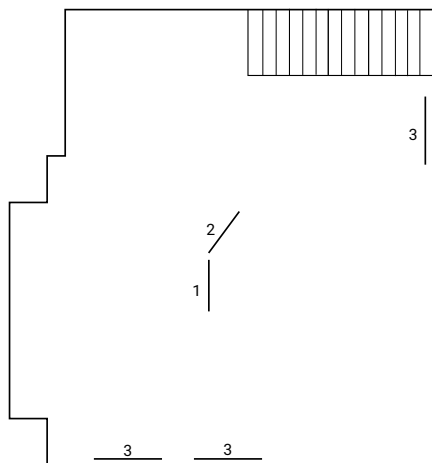
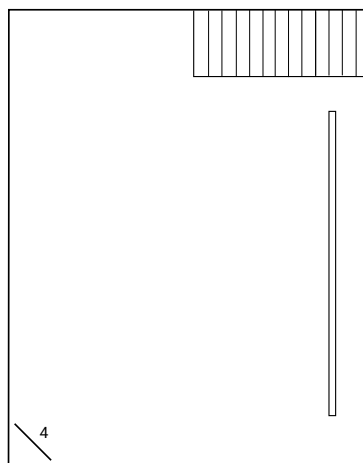


*Evelyn Plaschg, Valentina Triet*



Evelyn Plaschg

1. *Say it (this)*, 2019, Pigment on paper, 75 x 236 cm
2. *Lie to yourself and believe it*, 2019, Pigment on paper, 75 x 236 cm
3. *Untitled*, 2021, Inkjet Prints, Variable Dimensions



Valentina Triet

4. *02/01 : (Pattern as a Teacher)*, 2021, Filmstill, HD Video, 00:26 min. Loop

Evelyn Plaschg, (b. 1988, Gnas, Austria) is a visual artist based in Vienna. Plaschg studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and at ENSBA Paris. She received the Marianne Defet Stipend for painting in 2020/2021. Her works have recently been exhibited at: Kunstverein Nürnberg, Nuremberg (2021), Kirchgasse Gallery, Steckborn (2021), Pina, Vienna (2021), Galerie PCP, Paris (2020), Zeller van Almsick, Vienna (2020).

Valentina Triet, (b. 1991, Winterthur, Switzerland) is a visual artist based in Zurich and Vienna. Triet graduated in the class of Heimo Zobernig at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and previously studied at ECAL and the Gerrit Rietveld Academy. Her work has recently been exhibited at Felix Gaudlitz, Vienna (2021) and will be part of the festival Les Urbaines, Lausanne in December this year.

Pornography shouldn't be mistaken for the objectification that arises from some (or indeed from most) pornography. Pornography is a system of subjective representation, a system for which we are responsible. If we want to have access to and circulate a kind of pornography that corresponds with who we are, then it's up to us to produce it and define its modes of circulation.

“Write this down! Write this down!: That you can't fight City Hall is a rumor being spread by City Hall.” As her former student Sarah Schulmann reminds us, in Audre Lorde's words, “City Hall” stands in for institutions of all kinds: schools, the justice system, the patriarchy...

If we want to act upon our cultural history and the methods through which we share it, then we need to take control of its functions and its narratives. For artists, this means creating spaces, thinking about our economies, and reflecting critically on our heritage from our point of view in the present.

It seems to me that this exhibition is an attempt to recognize and take into account this imperative. More generally, I think that both these artists are looking for strategies to deal with these questions: consciously taking charge of the tools and images of which – as womxn, students, producers – they are supposed to be the unquestioning users.

More specifically: with her paintings, her selfies, and her own body activated in the exhibition itself – in her role as a musician – Evelyn shapes the conditions of her self-representation; a circulation of medium and of information that attests to a mobile process and a subjective engagement, rather than the presentation of a finalized result.

When I saw Evelyn's work, I thought first of Cosey Fanny Tutti. In her autobiography *Art, Sex, Music*, Cosey Fanni Tutti reflects on her first job as a pornographic model and how she experienced carving out a space and acting on her own image (she would later appropriate the images of

herself as a model that were published in mainstream porn magazines and exhibit them as an artist): “I was pretty ecstatic at the double infiltration, of appearing in both guises, as model and artist.”

Evelyn adds: exhibiting her paintings and photographs containing sexual connotations and selfies are means to face and expose herself to mixed emotions “until you grasp what you like about them”. There's something therapeutic in the production of autopornographic images, something that is worth describing: the exercise, the time and the physical training that it takes to master poses and representations; the choices that have to be made in terms of angles and positions, in terms of the post-production processing of the images – what we want to show, to hide, to crop out or to airbrush. Those that Evelyn makes intentionally induce a kind of vulnerability and refuse to follow dominant aesthetic criteria. This is part of the performative nature of her work – her oversized recorder, the tranquil but insistent presence of her body in the white cubes where she exhibits – which compelled her to “start something uncomfortable.”

In a way, this exhibition seems to follow up on a new cycle of Evelyn's work. Pieces like *Say it (this)* and *Lie to yourself and believe it* suggest the transformative character of her practice: “The shapes resemble a sort of vibration. They initially came from images of speaking mouths shaping words, but I also think of vaginas, or a big light source, something sucking in, or sending out.”

From model to motif: for Valentina Triet, appropriation is a question of acting on the contours formed by authority, education, and institutions. For years now, Valentina's work has consisted of resisting and deconstructing the spaces and the formats that are imposed upon her. When I learnt about the screenings that she organized in her apartment, I came to better understand her work on “idols”. Contributing to the writing of non-universal histories means providing a voice and a means of circulation to womxn who haven't otherwise left traces: the womxn filmmakers whose

work she screened in her apartment (her art school refused to allow her to organize a film club to show them), the artists that she interviewed on the subject of their chosen families (or as she calls them, their “idols”), and her videos “Pattern as a Teacher”. This exhibition will feature one of her “Patterns”. Though she initially thought about producing a new one, she ultimately decided to exhibit for the second time this year #2 – “the one with the fabrics and drawings, and tree branches” – on the basis that “it might fit better with Evelyn’s work”. Here and elsewhere, Valentina works contextually, in interaction with her social, ecological, political environment; she is uninterested in the pretense of authority and the corresponding notion that her work comes “out of nowhere”.

She explains that the series “Pattern as a teacher” is also an inquiry into the way in which exterior elements – plant matter, objects found in the street – can be transformed into domestic ones as they become sewing patterns in her videos. As I look at this series, I wonder what abstract – psychedelic? – forms might arise from materialist feminism. What comes to mind first, are the experimental videos of 1970s white feminists, women who picked up cameras to document their struggles, from Carole Rossopoulos to Barbara Hammer. But that’s not really it. Valentina prefers to think with Shigeko Kubota, for example, whose *Vagina Painting* is described (a little condescendingly, in my opinion) by historian Kristine Stiles as “the most aggressively proto-feminist performance of Fluxus.” In the 70s, Kubota herself summed up her practice with the mantra “Video is Vengeance of Vagina”. A few years later, Vaginal Davis began to activate her “terrorist drag” in video-fanzines. As I think about this work, I feel that their political dimension doesn’t really lie in their subject matter, let alone in their themes. Their power lies more in their conditions of production, of circulation and of existence: it is these that allow them to shake up their contexts and reach beyond their original “milieus”.

Over the last few weeks, Valentina, Evelyn and I have been communicating a lot. At first, I had a hard time writing about work that

was so geographically and physically distant from me. When I began, I wrote that “I am really bad at understanding works in a portfolio. There is Evelyn’s, portrait format, and Valentina’s, landscape. It’s hard to feel the gaze, the bodies and the voices of works that are so far away, but day after day it’s like they’re getting closer”. Since then, I feel like we have managed to connect, thanks to a sisterhood that each of us has decided to invest in by sharing our difficulties, our doubts, our disappointments, our projections.

I think that great collaborations are often founded on ‘bad’ reasons, by which I mean, non-objective ones: they’re pretexts for being together, talking, hanging out. I understand this exhibition and its different elements (included this text) as a trial, an attempt to gather some material from each of these activities, as a method for self-definition where one coexists with the other.

Olga Rozenblum

Olga Rozenblum is curator, producer and teacher in art schools (ENSAPC, HEAD, Parsons). She is a member of Treize in Paris, and of several feminist groups. Lately, she has been working on Dustan’s film retrospective in France and at Kunsthalle Friart, on a video-zine with Vaginal Davis and students of HEAD art school, and on a wide research project at the Centre Grisélidis Réal in Geneva. Last texts she wrote for some exhibitions were accompanying the shows of Caroline Schattling Villeval and Thomas Liu Le Lann. She is currently writing several essays that will notably be published in 2022 in the Catalogue of the Centre Grisélidis Réal and in the second issue of the WE ARE NOT WHERE WE NEED TO BE BUT, WE AIN’T WHERE WE WERE, series of publications by the collective Wages For Wages Against.

James Horton translated this text. He is an art historian, translator and curator based in Paris. He recently curated the show Claude Pelieu, Blue Kid at Treize, Paris.

