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SIREN (some poetics)

September 15, 2022–March 5, 2023

Katja Aufleger, Patricia L. Boyd, Bia Davou, Sky Hopinka, Liliane Lijn, Bernadette Mayer, Rosemary Mayer, Nour Mobarak, Senga Mengudi, Rivane Neuenschwander, Mayra A. Rodríguez Castro, Aura Satz, Ser Serpas, Shanzhai Lyric, Jenna Sutela, Iris Touliatou, and Dena Yago

Curated by Quinn Latimer

Curatorial text:

Sirens are alarms: they signal harm. In the ancient world, sirens were figured as women (part bird or part fish but all witch) whose seductive song was an invitation to self-harm. Their song had sailors forget their homes, language, and sense of self, offering stasis and death instead. Both siren songs, ancient and nascent, remain in the realm of danger, then. Still, if our conceptions of sirens have changed, our notions of control have not. We would still like to save ourselves in every instance; we would still like to get home, sweet song or not. Yet in the original Greek of the *Odyssey*, of the Sirens who sang to Odysseus and his crew, no body was indicated but a voice. The seduction the Sirens offered was cognitive; it was knowledge. The technology of their voices was some “honeyed song,” emitted as if from a speaker over land across water indicating other imposed borders: between exile and home, foreign and familiar, female and male, nonhuman and human, danger and safety, transgression and normativity, sonic disobedience and sonic obedience, that is, language as noise and language as linguistic meaning. These borders were an ideology of enforced binaries, and fundamentally unjust and untrue. But poetry is politics, always. Yet either all body or all sound, either reading or being read, our siren might be prosthetic and/or symbiotic, at once an ecosystem and an elegy—that is, an extension of our hybridized selves into other receiving bodies.

SIREN (some poetics) examines what lies beyond such borders and binaries—ancestral, technological, epistemological, literary, patriarchal, corporeal, emotional or otherwise. Devoted to the voice—as aesthetic signature or the production of self and sound and language—and the avatar-like bodies we build and break around it, the exhibition considers technologies of myth and mouth, earth and alarm, gender and poetics. Through the work of approximately seventeen artists and poets of various generations and geographies, the show posits practices that employ a grammar of sign and sound systems, at once figuring, resisting, writing, and voicing the visual field. Moving away from the cool, clinical, conceptual and mostly two-dimensional exhibitions that have so often stood for language and poetry as a visual art practice, in which the white cube stands in for the pale architectonic page, *SIREN* is situated in the dank earth and its

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kaleidoscopic ecosystems. Both human and nonhuman forms of language-making and poetics are posited, from precolonial myth to ludic science fiction, the bootlegged oracular line to critical fabulation, fungal networks to gut bacteria, text to textile to poem to prism to algorithm. Indeed, the works on view often emit and evidence a kind of parapoetics: poetry as opaque metabolic structuring or as some wild surfacing.

Questions we might ask (well): How to survey the siren as a figure of myth, mouth, earth, sound, silence, alarm, poetics, bacteria, and hyphae? How to understand it as a kind of technology: of gender, text, textile, machine, violence, security, and fiction? What of the poem's origin in song, and that song as medicine or epic, history or ideology, complicity or resistance? What of the poetics of alarm, and the authority and authoritarianism of language itself? To consider the siren as both mythic trope and contemporary warning system (perhaps one and the same), one must examine in which forms its production—of alarm, body, ideology, prophecy, transgression, the nonhuman given human form, sound made voice, or vice-versa, danger given grammar—occurs. Yet as artists center a certain poetics, their works trace and break the always animated border between language as a visual art practice and language as a literary one.

Finally, poetics, like violence, are inseparable from the technologies of their times. From the collectively composed and orally rehearsed *Odyssey*—attributed to a Homer—to contemporary visual art and poetry practices today, our poetics are entangled with the technologies and communication systems that condition their making and enable (or disable) their circulation. The exhibition, then, features an online program called *The Noon Sirens*. Curated by Hana Moorali and Lynton Talbot, it offers newly commissioned works by Anaïs Duplan, Johanna Hedva, and Lara Mimoso Montes, whose offerings deal with performance and acoustic experience and poetics in manifold ways, from narrating abstracted rap videos (Duplan) to examining citation and translation (Montes). In each of the works gathered here, though, both on and offline, technologies of language, desire, cognition, violence, gender, and place, and myths of normativity and supremacy and their long histories, are felt, articulated, critiqued, and channeled, as are the bodies continually fashioned out of them. *No body but a voice*, as the ancients might have said. *To read or be read*, as our contemporaries might reply. Each a kind of warning for those bound for and to a language-strewn future.

SIREN (some poetics) is accompanied by a public program of readings, performances, and learnshops over the course of the exhibition, as well as a publication, to be published by Dancing Foxes Press in early 2023.

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List of works by Gallery:

GALLERY 315 Maujer

① Liliane Lijn

Study for Woman of War III, 1984

Oil pastels, ink, self-adhesive velvet, and mirror on filter paper



② Mour Mobarak

Fugue I and Fugue II, 2019

Trametes versicolor mycelium, wood pellets, and speaker



Language is a material that the artist Mour Mobarak relies on for its intersensory potential, at once memorial and generative (is there a difference). The vessels of her embedded sound sculptures are made with a medicinal saprophytic mycelia, a fungi with its own intelligent network that reproduces itself by eating dead matter. She feeds the works with wood pellets to cultivate their growth; mushrooms, the fruiting bodies of mycelia, write and wreath their surface, giving ancient form and legibility to decreation. Form figured by decay echoes the sound compositions the sculptures emit. One sound component offers phonetic utterances and acapella songs; the other, conversations with the artist's late father, Jean Mobarak, a polyglot with a 30-second (and decaying) memory. Here, Mour and her father speak in French, Italian, English, and Arabic, about cars, Italy, soccer, cities, and love. They speak in song, in rhyme, as play. Their echoing refrains and melodic conversations constantly circle back, reprised like the motifs of Baroque fugues. The elder Mobarak passed away in the mountains of Lebanon in the summer of 2022. This work is shown in his memory.

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③. Senga Mengudi

R.S.V.P. Reverie-Combat Fatigue, 1977-2011

Nylon, mesh, and sand

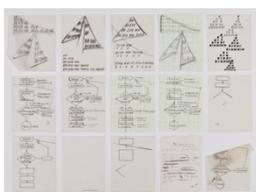


Senga Mengudi's artistic name signals a sounding. "Senga" means *listen* or *hear* in the Duala language, while "Mengudi" translates to "a woman who comes to power as a traditional healer." If her practice has long centered the abstract language of materials, it also emphasizes their virtuosic performances and ritualistic resonance with the limits and conditions of the body. Mengudi has described her "R.S.V.P." series of soft, sculptural works of knotted nylon appendages, weighted with sand, as "fabric spirits" and "abstracted reflections of used bodies." Whose body, though? Her works—articulating embodiment, elasticity, and time while examining sculptural mores like form, space, volume, line, and gravity—suggest such weighted, metaphysical questions. The "R.S.V.P." series emerged from Mengudi's experience of pregnancy and motherhood and the transformations (corporeal, ecstatic, otherwise) that occurred with it. It also reflects on the history of Black wet-nurses, which the artist notes suckled "child after child, their own as well as those of others, until their breasts rested on their knees." If her series title invokes the familiar French acronym for "please respond," it is attended to in this work by the rhyming dichotomy of reverie and fatigue. A dancer and performer influenced by Gutai during her studies in Japan, Mengudi meant her nylon works to be manipulated and performed, by collaborators like Maren Hassinger, Ulysses Jenkins, or herself. Thus, the works initially offer stillness and silence but also the inevitability of movement. That said, Mengudi is also a poet, writing under the persona of the pointedly named Lily Bea Moor, whose poems can be found elsewhere in the exhibition.

④. Bia Davou

Untitled, 1980s

Fifteen pages; marker, pencil on tracing, and graph paper



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5. Bia Davou

Untitled (If, Yes, No, Impossible, Stop), 1973

Ink, pencil, and marker on watercolor paper



The artistic oeuvre of Bia Davou (1932–1996) was devoted, in part, to the poetics of communication and the ideological and serial structures of language, from myth to math, epic poetry to the Fibonacci sequence. From the 1970s on, the Athens-based artist experimented with scientific models, information technologies, and ancient literary inheritance, translating them into visual artworks that often suggest technologies both ancient (weaving and writing) and recent (coding). Despite her devotion to serialism, however, her work remained lucidly expressive and handmade, evoking musical notation and the early avant-garde. In *Untitled (If, Yes, No, Impossible, Stop)*, 1973, the titular words in Greek are overlaid, like some instructive and yet ambiguous palimpsest, over a circuit board-like ground. The work also evokes a sign of protest, with all the desire and ambivalence such resistance holds. It was made the year of the Athens Polytechnic student uprising in Greece against the military junta of 1967–1974. The student protests began in November 1973, and effectively brought the Greek dictatorship to an end the following year. Davou's works often explored the Homeric dialectical ideas of *Nostos* and *Thanatos*, that is longing for return and renown, and death. Both find resonance, in some sidelong way, here.

6. Dena Yago

Rope and Lead, 2018

Pressed wool, hand embroidery, pewter charms, and steel



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7. Jenna Sutela

nimiia cétii, 2018

HD video, sound, color, 19 minutes



Jenna Sutela employs words, sounds, bacterium, and other living materials in her installations, performances, and videos that channel precarious social moments entangled with technology. She often casts the computer as medium—as a new alien—able to conduit messages from entities that we usually cannot hear or understand. Inspired by experiments in interspecies communication, in *nimiia cétii* she documents the relations of a neural network, audio recordings of a Martian language, and footage of extremophilic bacteria; a kind of bacterial chorus or glossolalia results. The work uses machine learning to generate a new written and spoken language based on the computer's interpretation of a Martian tongue from the late 1800s, originally channeled and written down by the Swiss spiritualist and artist Hélène Smith, while simultaneously recording the movements of *Bacillus subtilis*, which, according to recent spaceflight experiments, might survive on Mars. Smith, who received the Martian language in her trances, claimed to be a reincarnation of both Marie Antoinette and a Hindu deity named Simandini, and was known as the muse of automatic writing by the Surrealists. Smith's Martian language was said to be a kind of speaking in tongues. So might be Sutela's, though her tongue is also a computer, and a bacterium.

8. Rosemary Mayer

Banner to Stand Near a Moon Tent, 1982

Watercolor and colored pencil on paper



From the late 1970s to the early 1980s, New York-based artist Rosemary Mayer (1943-2014) created luminous and witty drawings of tents that she envisioned as sites for celebration that would echo the ancient Greek festivals linked to women and the changing of the seasons, as well as to Chinese moon celebrations. Mayer often situated her tents on New York City rooftops, where one might watch the spectral full moon rise. "To let the moon be seen, a

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moon tent can't have a roof," she wrote. "And its supports have to float, suggest the draped figures who would have been holding them up, caryatids and the dancing women who held the moon." Alongside her tents, she envisioned banners and lanterns (that which holds writing or light) for these occasions, and she often drew them. Her tent drawings include repeated written refrains in her inimitable slant and cursive hand: chatty asides to viewers to participate. "Anyone can build one," some drawings declare. Others ask: "Have you got the time?" and: "Can you stay up late?" The drawings mostly remained unrealized performances, but in 1982 Mayer created *Moon Tent*, an installation on the roof of art historian Robert Hobbs's home. The work was installed for one night, during the October full moon, as people played music and ate moon-shaped food. In one of her notebooks, Mayer queried her own motivations. "What kind of pleasures am I suggesting with my tents," she asked, before listing: "Sex, lying about in softness, contemplation of transitory forms." Pleasure, then, was paramount.

9. Rosemary Mayer

Orfeo Mourns Eurydice at Her Urn, the Chorus Comforts Him, 1982
Charcoal, pastel, and graphite on paper



Mayer had a longtime fascination with the Greco-Roman world, and the gendered myths and historiography it both did and did not relinquish. Among her many works that gleaned Greek mythology and the histories of Roman women were Mayer's series of *Orfeo and Eurydice* drawings, made in 1982 for *Drawings for Productions*, an exhibition at the Soho Baroque Opera Company, an alternative space in a harpsichord factory on West Broadway run by Robert Bueker. Mayer's drawings depict scenes from the titular early 1762 Italian opera, based on the myth of Orpheus, composed by Christoph Willibald Gluck. The vessel depicted in Mayer's drawing is a funeral urn, around which mourners, including Orfeo, might dance. The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice has long inspired composers, artists, dancers, filmmakers, and, most famously, poets. In an ancient world, Orpheus was considered the father of poetry, of music, and the art of writing itself. Mayer's own investment in writing, poetics, and the classics was deep and considered, yet her take on the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, which is often approached with grave seriousness (see Apollinaire, Rilke, Cocteau, Sartre and Senghor, et al.) is, instead, light and strange and urbane and a bit fetish.

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10. Sky Hopinka

I think of my home tonight. I don't have any resolutions, but I've felt so much through these streets, these neighborhoods. This land and this Land hold so much, and this pain and this Pain call for salves we already have, still needing to be wrapped and poulticed., 2020

The clouds are too dull this time of year. It's late June and I'm full of anger and hate. They think we're trash, they think we're as useless as our garbage buried in their fields turned up under plow, exposed in heavy rain. It makes me angry to think about that. To feel like that. Under plow and over plowed and plowed over by machines dredging and weeding through the hills and the fields and my family and my home., 2020

The mountains are growing and you're over there looking at me like that. These Breathing's are begging's, these Breathing's are asking for anything having to do with direction. Wrapped in blankets made of clouds, Morning Star got up and pointed the way. We were too tired and too weak to proceed, but still the gesture is still in the east at a certain time of year., 2020

Ink jet print, etching



11. Bia Davou

Untitled (Odyssey), 1980s

Ink, fabric and thread on linen (set of four sails comprising one installation): small black sail; large sail with brown fabric; sail with black fabric and blue lettering; sail with gray lettering



Bia Davou's series of "Sails," large-scale textile works embroidered with Homeric verse and Fibonacci's golden spiral sequence, conflate technologies both ancient—Greek epic poetry—with those more recent: the language of cybernetics. This relationship between text and textile, song and poem, the oral and the written,

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epic and code—and the serial structures and operating technologies that weave them together—was a long preoccupation of the artist, whose works in various media evoke the seriality and circulation of language and meaning in radically different ways. In her late set of “Sails” on view here, lines from the *Odyssey* are embroidered on fabric whose form and title suggest the sails of ships that both did and did not take Odysseus, famously, home. They also invoke the gendered labor of Penelope’s dazzling weaving (suggesting who wove the sails of all those ancient ships), which epic poetry often conflated with the weaving of tales, that is, poetry and renown itself. One of Davou’s “Sails” here is scripted with the defining Homeric dialectical ideas of *Nostos* and *Thanatos*. The latter is a figure of death (and its drives). Per the poet Hesiod’s *Theogony*, Thanatos is the son of night and the brother of sleep. *Nostos*, meanwhile, is the operating trope of ancient Greek literature, in which an epic hero returns home after a long journey, beset by challenges, and is granted fame. *Nostos* suggests a longing for return and renown. Odysseus’s most famous challenge to getting home was the Sirens, whose female and not-quite-human voices, and all the knowledge their entrancing sound imparted, would, if heard, bring stasis, exile, death, no fame at all.

12. Patricia L. Boyd

Borrowed Time I, 2022

Borrowed Time II, III, IV, V, 2022

Borrowed Time VI, VII, 2022

Borrowed Time VIII, 2022

Borrowed Time IX, 2022

Used restaurant grease, wax, damar resin



Serial structures of communication, with their signs, silences, and thresholds—what is held and what is withheld—also define Patricia L. Boyd’s “Wall Pieces” (2017–).

Embedded high up on the wall, or placed at eye level, Boyd’s cast objects—soft, amber forms of some illumined opacity—can appear like votives, like relics, like icons, like fragments of memory and language, both image and sculpture, sign and signified. For them, the artist makes negative casts of small precision consumer objects—here the appendages of a Herman Miller ‘Aeron’ office chair and a Technic turntable, both of which Boyd bought at liquidation auction—and embeds them into institutional walls. These readable yet gnostic objects concern

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calibration and ergonomics, cognitive labor and office work. As a lexicon of forms recessed in the wall, they can suggest the room-as-stanza—that is, the basic unit of poetry and its pale architectonic page. Their citational structure, meanwhile, invokes memory and its medium, language. The abject materiality of the casts themselves—made of food, grease, leftover biological matter—implicate a soiled softness, lucid with light, into the hard, clean, white drywall in which they are embedded. Boyd's works are, in a sense, double negatives, that is, receptive forms: negative casts then embedded into recesses in the walls. How far, one wonders, do they need to go? What eroticism of negation, and its sister, abjection, is this?

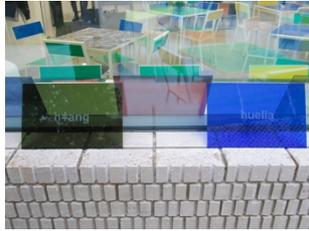
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13. Mour Mobarak

Dafne Phos, 2022

Etched colored glass



Mour Mobarak's newly commissioned piece is a work of concrete poetry made out of light and shadows, color and language. It emerges from the libretto of *La Dafne*, the first opera from 1598. Like so many Greco-Roman mythic female figures, Dafne was physically transformed into a nonhuman figure under threat of a god's violence. In this case, she was transmogrified into a laurel tree to escape Apollo. To that end, Mobarak's work plays with language vis-à-vis the transformation of peoples and power. Here, she selects one word from Dafne's opening lines in the opera—*footprint*—and translates it into six languages; these words are then etched into different colored glass panes. "Del fugitivo cervo / quest'è pur orma impressa: / fusse almen qui vicin la fera stessa," Dafne begins. In English: "Of the fugitive deer / this is the very footprint impressed: / if only the beast itself was here nearby." Beside the original Italian and Latin, the languages Mobarak uses here are the most phonetically complex still in existence. A wide range of sounds, both language tones and clicks, are signified but not heard by the colored panes, then. Etymologically, "footprint" leaves both a light and heavy trace: in Latin, it means vestige, moment, and instant, as well as footprint.

orma	(Italian)
vestigium	(Latin)
huella	(Spanish for Silbo Gomero whistling language)
ашьта	(Abkhaz)
nřang	(I'Xoon)
jyaq' slaq'	(Eastern Chatino)

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932 GRAND GALLERY

14. Rosemary Mayer

City Roof Tent on Wheels, 1980

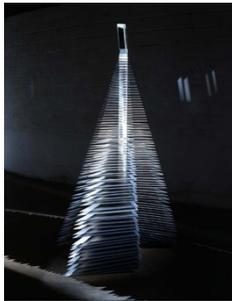
Watercolor and colored pencil on paper



15. Liliane Lijn

Queen of Hearts, Queen of Diamonds, 1980

Two sculptures; optical glass prism, and aluminum



The Queens—one of muscular organs, one of solid carbon minerals—are twins. Based on the idea that structure is born from the interaction of negative and positive elements, the sculptures are many-layered, conical, and derived from the radiating reflective facets of a prism. The aluminum plates that make up the two sculptures were originally intended to form one sculpture. This proved too dense, and Lijn split the work into two equal and opposite figures. An optical glass tank prism serving as the artist's starting point, whose three facets were then extended out horizontally and vertically in space through a progression of triangular aluminum plates. At once material and immaterial, the Queens emerge from Lijn's long-held interest in pre-patriarchal female archetypes and goddess figures, Greek, Hindu, Indigenous or otherwise. Her various series of vertical prismatic sculptural figures are both mythic and speculative, their technologies of gender, history, and fabulation a corrective to the western trope of divinity as a male principle. "Spirit was claimed by man," she writes, "and woman was left with the burden of a body." What to do with it then. How to build it anew.

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16. Dena Yago

The Bins, 2021

The Announcement, 2021

Acrylic and ink jet on canvas in aluminum, and stainless steel frame



The artist and poet Dena Yago's allegorical screens issue queries and posit concerns at once epistemological, aesthetic, and economic. Suggesting both graphic novels and visual essays, each screen narrates the myriad ways in which language shields and divides and clothes us, using the virtuosic text-image visual grammar of cartoons (literally text boxes), while partitioning and channeling art viewers through the very space in which they are placed. As figurative assessments of au courant cultural issues and their ideological underpinnings, the paravents question labor, meaning, productivity, compensation, temporality, and language itself. One painted screen offers stacked Amazon delivery bins punctuated by cartoon buttons presenting inescapable rhetorical refrains and idiomatic equivalencies like "Value and Time." The riff is both philosophical and slapstick, but it also evokes a global precarious workforce of temporary contracts and zero rights, and the recent attempts to unionize such manual and cognitive laborers (from Amazon to art museum workers in New York, for example). On another screen, a group of puppies from Disney's *101 Dalmatians* (1961) is informed by an off-screen speaker that "the franchise is dead." If some of the puppies seem relieved, one is animated by alarm: her career and/or life depends on some sequel, that is, an artistic industry shaped by capital and returns, which casts and builds bodies around a certain voice, before disposing of them, and moving onto the next thing.

17. Katja Aufleger

Condition 7.3 5pm (Al Wakra), 2019

HD video, no sound, color, 10 minutes and 15 seconds



Katja Aufleger's work considers the phenomenon of sound as a visual, material, experiential, and narrative medium, one heard or remembered, audible or silent, offered by another or originated in the speaker/receiver. With its glitchy aesthetic and auditory resistance, her silent video of a Qatari dune as wind

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imperceptibly alters its familiar pyramidal, granular form, takes as its starting point the so-called singing dunes of the Al Wakra desert, and their acoustic, material, and mythological conditions. The phenomena of singing dunes—not myth but fact—in which the dune’s sheer, granular faces become speakers, and the avalanche of their grains, sound waves, suggests that wall of sound we often talk about in music. Here it is the face of the dune, as avalanches of grains move down its surface. If synchronized in their fall, a humming sound emerges; as grains collide with each other, audible booms are emitted. The size of the sand grains determines the tone, thus each dune offers a different song. In a late, fragmented poem, Paul Celan wrote: *Keine Sandkunst mehr, kein Sandbuch*, or: “No more sand art, no sand book.” The “sand” of his poem is often read as an invocation of the desert, of the Holy Land, and of the book as the holy book—both of which the poet negates. Neither art nor language, nor the ability to create coherent meaning through them. Yet Celan’s double negation, his line’s shifting ground of sand, might today widen, encompassing more than the specific destruction of life and language during Europe’s mid-century horrors to contemporary issues of war and its acoustic experience, ecological violence and state misogyny, and all of their soundscapes.

18. Aura Satz

Preemptive Listening (part 1: The Fork in the Road), 2018

Film, stereo, color, sound, 8 minutes and 47 seconds



Aura Satz’s ongoing research project on sonic obedience and disobedience is here explored through the trope of the siren. Her short 16mm film, *Preemptive Listening (part 1: The Fork in the Road)*, posits the siren’s glissando wail as a “conditioned and learned signal, one that can potentially be perceptually and musically rewired.” In the film, actor and activist Khalid Abdalla narrates his experience of sirens in Egypt during a moment in the Arab Spring, offering them up as the emblematic sound of resistance, oppression, and lost futures. His voice becomes a beacon, activating emergency rotating lights that spin across the film according to the cadence of his speech, suggesting histories of experimental structural cinema as well as structural political violence. Meanwhile, Lebanese trumpet improviser Mazen Kerbaj plays a composition using circular breathing, citing a previous experience striated by sirens, when, in July 2006, he stood on a balcony in Beirut and played his trumpet to the sound of Israeli bombs falling in the distance. “How to listen ahead?” Satz has asked, reflecting on her work. “How to hold the future in mind when listening? The siren is the prism through which to refract this notion of *Preemptive Listening*.”

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19. Liliane Lijn

Study for Woman of War V, 1984

Ink and watercolor on filter paper



20. Sky Hopinka

Fainting Spells, 2018

HD video, stereo, color, sound, 9 minutes and 45 seconds



Sky Hopinka's film is an imagined myth for the *X̣aẉįska*, or the Indian Pipe Plant, a medicinal plant used by the Ho-Chunk to revive those who have fainted. It is narrated through recollections of Ho-Chunk youth, learning, lore, and ideas of departure and arrival. Language in his film is offered in its many guises: as spectral song, ancestral story, handwritten subtitles, poetic script, mythological fabulation, and trancelike oral narrative. The layering of image and subtitle and voiceover is kaleidoscopic, showing the manifold ways in which communication can be cast and offered and weighed. Language situates Hopinka's practice as an artist, filmmaker, and poet who often works with images, both moving and still. He has taught *chinuk wawa*, a language indigenous to the Lower Columbia River Basin, and his works posit personal positions of Indigenous homeland and landscape while considering language as a container of culture expressed through personal, documentary, and nonfiction forms.

21. Rivane Neuenschwander

The Silence of the Sirens, 2013

Felt, thread, fusible interfacing, and D-ring metal



In Kafka's parable *The Silence of the Sirens*, he writes, decisively: "Now the Sirens have a still more fatal weapon than their song, namely their silence." It is to this

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he attributes Odysseus's survival, not the wax with which his crew closed their ears, or the rope with which they bound him to his mast. Rivane Neuenschwander's hanging fabric work takes Kafka's thesis and casts it as both conceptual poem—see the small and large S's of "silence" and "Sirens" stud her pale fabric field like some piece of paper—and as weaving-as-literary-analysis. Odysseus's wife was, of course, Penelope, the expert weaver who kept her suitors away by weaving and unweaving the same shroud every night. Weaving and epic poetry were often made analogous in ancient Greek texts, their technology conflated. If Neuenschwander's larger practice pursues an "ethereal materialism," as she calls it, it is one in which issues of language, materiality, temporality, geography, inheritance, and the social world are stitched together to create aesthetic experiences as expertly layered and tightly woven as a poem or parable itself.

22. Sky Hopinka

Here and after, never knowing what came before or comes next, they sit and watch the ocean thinking of the sand and what's buried underneath. I heard a long time ago that there's a village somewhere near here. Under the sand, overgrown by trees, restless and quiet., 2020

Ink jet print, etching



23. Bernadette Mayer

Untitled (index of letters with their corresponding colors), originally published in *Proper Name*, 1996

Poem projected on screen

a red
b pink
c tan
d black
e green
f blue gray
g brown
h gray-blue
i gray
j light brown
k dark blue
l gray
m brown
n gray
o white
p blue-purple
q gold
r orange-red
s yellow
t blue-gray
u gray
v gray-purple
w light brown
x darker brown
y yellow-gold
z brown

Bernadette Mayer's wall poems on view correspond to a synesthesiac index that she created in the 1990s based on how she sees letters, in which each

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letter of the Modern English alphabet corresponds to a different hue. The poems themselves come from her books *Works and Days* (2016) and *A Bernadette Mayer Reader* (1992). An experimental poet, writer, and artist, Mayer has long pursued epic, diaristic, and durational literary projects and constraint-based works of poetry, as well as conceptual artworks that she has called “emotional science experiments.” Her more than thirty books include *Midwinter Day* (1982), an epic poem devoted to the quotidian—writing, mothering, cooking, thinking, reading, sleeping, dancing, working, cleaning, loving, surviving—that narrates a single December day in 1978. (The book-length poem also includes an index of various forms of visual art practice written by her sister Rosemary Mayer.) Other epics of poetics include *Memory* (2020), which collects in book form her July 1971 project in which she produced more than 1100 photographs, and two hundred pages of text, in her examination of the nature of memory, as well as the collections *Eating the Colors of a Lineup of Words: The Early Books of Bernadette Mayer* (2015), and *The Helens of Troy* (2013). As co-editor of the experimental magazine *O To 9*, with Vito Acconci, and *United Artists*, with Lewis Warsh, Mayer has long fused poetry and visual art practice, and the conceptual, critical, and narrative methodologies that so often attempt to demarcate them. A book of her correspondence with her sister was recently published as *The Letters of Rosemary & Bernadette Mayer, 1976-1980* (2022), edited by Gillian Sneed and Marie Warsh.

24. Bia Davou

Untitled, 1980s

Ballpoint pen on graph paper



25. Rosemary Mayer

Festive Tent with Lanterns, 1975

Colored pencil and pastel on paper



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26. Rosemary Mayer

In Time Order (Day Lily), 1978

Ink, oil crayon, and photograph on paper



27. Sky Hopinka

Free me from this body, my voice can carry only so far. Free me from this body, as I lay on the grass it feels heavy and I can't move. Free me from this body, the color burns brown with dark limbs so tired and missing the weightless breadth of above., 2020

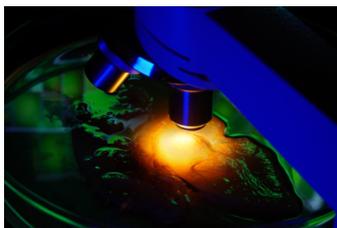
Ink jet print, etching



28. Jenna Sutela

Gut-Machine Poetry, 2017

HD video, sound, color, 19 minutes and 1 second



Jenna Sutela often attempts to interfere with language and its symbolic systems, trying on other forms of language-making through the employ of bacterium, slime molds (in her performance *Many-Headed Reading*), and computational processes. As she reflects on all the ways in which humans interface with technology, she is inspired by “wetware,” the idea of a machine with organic, living innards and the potential for biological computing. In *Gut-Machine Poetry*, she examines intelligence as an embodied thing, inserting a gut into a computer via a kombucha ferment that works as a number generator. The work proposes a biological computer system in which the chaotic activity of

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micro-organisms contributes to the creation of a new type of poetry. As the video portrays the evolution of a symbiotic kombucha colony, where yeast and bacteria together produce a stream of words that constitute a new language, the database it interacts with is fed texts glossing the complexities of language and self-replicating machines and code laws. On the basis of biochemical cues from the colony, an algorithm creates new combinations of poetic fragments: a new kind of computer poetry, one that might be inside us already.

29. Bernadette Mayer

"Sardines," originally published in *Works and Days*, 2016

Vinyl cut

Sardines
is a yell we, red, orange, black & green
word, I got sardines at the dollar store
where everything except sardines is more
than a dollar, for sixty cents, as they should be
my father used to take sardine sandwiches to work
perhaps there're, I love sardines, when people
used to talk about the subway, they'd say:
we were packed like sardines which sends a message:
small, cheap, tightly packed, anti-vies. For the price
of your car can be a fruit & inexpensive as
a really stumpy, tiny bright blue convertible
in which you can enjoy the good things about
feeling like a sardine but maybe you'd rather
be a striped bass or be a manatee with mev
or a grand whale, forgetful of nothing even
being so big, the ocean's CEO, you'll take home
a grand amount of cash when the ocean goes bust
so you can share it even with the d-sword-dden
sardines who get packed in cans in Thailand
& shipped to the family dollar store for Bernadette
—Bernadette Mayer

30. Katja Aufleger

Sirens (Al Wakra Vol.III), 2019

Seven glass organ pipes, engine, wood, silicone hose, and aluminum



Katja Aufleger's *Sirens (Al Wakra Vol.III)* are constituted, both materially and conceptually, from Qatar's desert, and its famous "singing dunes." At once sculptures and instruments designed to echo those dunes' tones, her work comprises a series of glass organ pipes in various configurations connected to engines and tubes of oscillating air. The sounds the glass pipes emit are the kinds of evocative, almost haptic drones and electronic blips familiar to listeners of new music and experimental electronica. The instruments themselves are delicately beautiful translucent organ pipes made from quartz and Al Wakra desert sand. If we all know that glass is made of sand, still the transformation from rough grain to translucent material remains miraculous, and as strange as a dune that might sing to those who approach it. Yet if the artworks begin with the dunes of Al Wakra, they depart from there, going in disparate directions, like

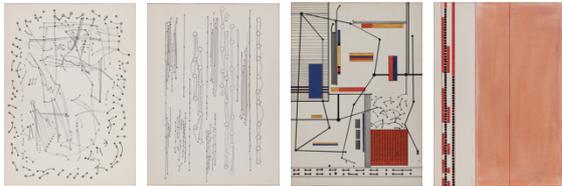
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grains of sand dispersed by wind. Here, Aufleger's glass pipes rest horizontal, in a series of seven. Their forms evoke transparent Cycladic funerary figures or gleaming medical instruments or the series of scars such instruments might attend to. Each minimalist 'volume' suggests a kind of formal art-historical analogy gleaned from the history of contemporary sculpture, as air pumps through its pipes, creating soundtracks that evoke the mythic drones of the desert, its acoustic experience and immaterial facts.

31. Bia Davou

Untitled, 1974-1978

Four works: Ink, pencil, dry pastel on watercolor paper



32. Liliane Lijn

Study for Woman of War V, 1984

Ink and watercolor on filter paper



The virtuosic sculptures of Liliane Lijn often offer technological bodies—all surface, sound, smoke, prisms, poems, and lasers—gleaned equally from pre-patriarchal myth and speculative science fiction, poetry and sculpture, archeology and ecology, as well as the burden of bearing a female-hewing body. Her small painting *Woman of War with Koans* depicts some of her common sculptural forms, from her rotating "Koans" and "Poem Machines" of the early 1970s to her later giant goddess figures of the 1980s. In this work, we see an image of her *Woman of War*, her female archetype allegorizing the creative impulse (in which creation remains a battle, and the artist a warrior), standing alongside a "Koan." In these latter sculptures of large conelike forms, often irregularly slatted tetrahedrons that revolve slowly in place, Lijn attempts to dematerialize volume and accept ambiguity. A koan, one could note, is a question without an answer. So might be this work on paper.

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33. Rosemary Mayer

Marie's Banners, 1982

Charcoal and pencil on paper



34. Bia Davou

Untitled (Serial Structures), 1970s

Ink on linen and rope



35. Iris Touliatou

Happiness, 2018 to 2022 (to Laurie), Vol. III

i. on accents and arousals, in vivo and in vitro

ii. on middle age in the islands

iii. on the sleep of mothers and the refusal of paternal legacies

iv. on spoilers and the bottom line, 2022

Unread email inbox, subscriptions, alerts, software, counters, verses, 7" LCD screen, carton, magnets, and eggs



Iris Touliatou's *HAPPINESS, 2018 to 2022 (to Laurie)* is the third volume of a series of works that survey the way language, both oral and written, scores and scripts lives inflected by gender, age, islands, ideology, economy, attachments, architecture, consumption, cities, poverty, ambition, disappointment, family, hormones, friendship, literature, climate collapse, geography, war, labor, desire,

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infrastructure, both maternal and paternal legacies. A small screen, held in place on the wall by the frame of an egg carton, offers a nonlinear narrative of textual fragments, statements, and non-sequiturs that appear, disappear, and are replaced against an unchanging dark digital ground. The pace of the captions' appearance onscreen—sometimes slow, sometimes fast—is set by custom-made software regulated by the speed of the incoming notifications from an entirely unread Gmail inbox. The inbox receives job alerts, astrological newsletters, weather predictions, travel opportunities, news headlines, and various spam and subscriptions, all which remain unopened and unread. As the unread emails pile up, the screen's own fragmented narrative fails to progress toward any resolution. The artist herself has written: "It is like lip-singing to the rhythm of one's selfcare, and to the attachments, attractions, and experiences of precarious living imposed by architectural, social, and economic structures." *Happiness* is dedicated to Laurie Parsons, as is the unread email account.

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GARDEN 306

36. Ser Serpas

undulating cathartic autonomy the shack, 2022

Mixed media of found objects (umbrella, public school desks)

the path lest take me away, 2022

Mixed media of found objects (tire, wall, metal bar from bookcase)



Ser Serpas is an artist-poet who, like Senga Mengudi, found her artistic and activist voice in Los Angeles, and likewise assembles quotidian and found material—from industrial detritus to gifted fabrics to gleaned fragments of language—into shapes we might call, in some dry shorthand, sculpture and poetry. Her work limns and loosens the line between value and meaning, material and form, volume and line, title and poem, furniture and garbage, inside and out. For courtyard she has created a new installation of sculptural works, whose ingredients—neither completely raw nor cooked—come from the streets around the industrial East Williamsburg neighborhood of warehouses, family homes, and small storefronts where the art foundation is situated, and which the artist spent the summer canvassing for ideas and discarded objects. The resulting installation is what the artist calls her “assisted readymades,” in which she sources her materials from the surrounding environs of the exhibition space, then produces them on site. The assembly of the work, and its titling, is its own performance, as Duchamp (also a poet) once taught us. The animating silence of Serpas’s sculpture—sometimes heavy, sometimes light and ludic—arises perhaps from its materiality and breadth, its deft consideration of volume, weight, line, and object, but it does not preclude her work’s investment in language, which is there, and which we might grasp, if only we could hear or read it.

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37. Mayra A. Rodríguez Castro

Senti, 2022

Stainless steel, aluminum and silver aggregate chimes, horsehair string



Issues of sound, narration, translation, poetic inheritance, and language both embodied and disembodied are integral to the work of poet, translator, and artist Mayra A. Rodríguez Castro. Her myriad and manifold oeuvre is situated in a long lineage of diasporic Black feminist narrative poetics and conceptual art practices: she has worked as an archivist for Adrien Piper and recently edited a collection of Audre Lorde's European writings, lectures, and seminars. For *SIREN (some poetics)*, Rodríguez Castro contributes a commissioned sound sculpture composed of wind bells made in Colombia to approximate the poet's own tonal register. The bells borrow from passing wind currents, "making a song in standing and sounding," as she notes. Their bells might be said to sound the alarm of wind, of weather, of airy disturbance, but their tone is anything but alarming. A free-bar instrument made of consecutive, hollow, metal bars, which play by clinking as they react to air draughts, the bars are tuned to the musical key of her voice: the minor to major notes reached by Rodríguez Castro herself. As she writes: "The low notes are obtained by vocalizing until the voice is nearly imperceptible. The high notes mark wherever the voice strains. Other vocal features are nonreplicable in the instrument because the voice is shaped internally by water, bone, and muscle. The brightness of the voice, a quality produced by vocal folds and intermittent spaces in the vocal tract, cannot be replicated in rigid metal. Yet every curve draws a sonic quality." Over the course of the exhibition, Rodríguez Castro accompanies her bells in a series of unplanned readings for two voices, or one.

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GALLERY 306: READING ROOM

38. Shanzhai Lyric

The Incomplete Poem, 2015–Ongoing

Poetry-garments, mixed media, dimensions variable



Shanzhai Lyric considers their ongoing *Incomplete Poem* (2015–) project to be one long poem moving across bodies and landscapes (like many ancient epics themselves). Indeed, the exhibition's thread of text and textile, and the oracular, bootlegged line as a kind of urbane geopolitical poetics, is woven through Shanzhai Lyric's body of work, from their archive of garments featuring poetic fragments to their recent work exploring gendered theft and counterfeit goods. The artistic duo's name shares certain resonances and rhymes with epics of ancient literatures and shipping societies (Eastern Mediterranean or otherwise), "Shanzhai Lyric" being an anonymously and collectively authored ongoing poem emerging out of the detritus of empire and consumerism and a trade-ridden oral-to-text culture. Meanwhile, what they call their "Poetic Research and Archival Unit" acts as a roving set of apparatuses for linguistic transmission, evoking questions of mistranslation—and the idea of translation as an anti-neocolonial mode, per the poet and translator Don Mee Choi (whose own works on the coloniality and violence of language are on view nearby as well). For *SIREN (some poetics)*, Shanzhai Lyric present a new iteration of *Incomplete Poem*, their shifting archive of *shanzhai* t-shirts they source in cities from Hong Kong to New York. Their purpose-built reading apparatuses often references structures where text and textile trouble the borders of public and private space: laundry lines, newspaper racks, billboards, runways, and trash heaps. Here, though, they inaugurate a new system, repurposing anti-theft security tags as a poetic tagging system for a growing archive of poetry-garments. Alongside the archive, accumulating reading materials explore the poetics of bootlegging, shoplifting as subversion, and the archetype of the thief.

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39. Shanzhai Lyric

Untitled (Portrait of a Siren), 2022

50 pounds plastic anti-theft security tags, anti-theft security panels and soundscape



Six tall panels are arranged in a circle, forming a siren chorus, of a kind. The work's sculptural form suggests a ritualistic circle of standing stones in particularly silver and slender manufacture, or more contemporary minimalist environmental sculpture, but it is composed of anti-theft panels designed to secure consumer goods and discourage the thief (whoever she may be). The sculpture's alarms are activated when viewers to the exhibition slip through the panels with the security tags that trigger the sirens (one of our contemporary rituals). The work emerges from the artists' interest in theories of gendered theft—that is shoplifting—and the auditory experience and specific policing that accompanies it. Visitors are invited to take the security tags—stealing the very item that attempts to catch the thief—and pass through the panels, which have been reprogrammed to emit a haunting and layered sonic landscape that evokes alarm, yes, but also something else. Composed of distorted siren sounds, their soundscape transforms instruments of punishment into instruments of song. Inspired by the mythical sirens, whose subversive singing and total knowledge lured ancient sailors away from trade and conquest and into stasis—or so it was told and then written down, *as poetry*—the artwork asks us to rethink ideas of property and theft, and to perhaps even celebrate the liberatory, redistributive aspirations of those who resist such notions of ownership. Created by Shanzhai Lyric in collaboration with artists Natalie Galpern and Yuhan Shen, the work is accompanied by a publication produced in conversation with feminist shoplifting theorist Silvia Bombardini. The publication considers “shui huo,” (水货), a Chinese phrase that means smuggled contraband but translates literally to “water goods,” referring to those undeclared commodities often cast-off ships in harbors to avoid taxes. What else do we cast off to avoid getting caught?

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40. Rosemary Mayer

100 Years (selection), 2007–2011

Six works; watercolor and ink on paper



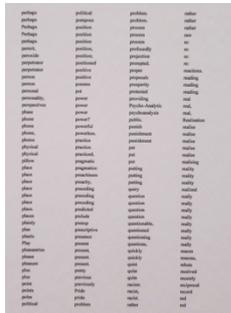
Rosemary Mayer's *100 Years* series of watercolors narrate the lives of elite Roman and Byzantine political women between the fifth and sixth centuries in the form of a particularly painterly and color-struck graphic novel format. Like one of her most well-known fabric sculptures, *Galla Placidia*, Mayer's *100 Years* series of works consider powerful women figures like the titular daughter of the Roman emperor Theodosius I, who was a mother, tutor, and advisor to emperor Valentinian III. The works on view here narrate the entangled and often related lives of Roman royalty, including Justina, an empress married to Valentinian I, as well as Juliana, a princess and daughter of Anicius Olybrius, one of the last of the Western Roman emperors. Along with their marrying and mothering and politicking—the women bred emperors then raised and advised them—they also did scholarly work. Around 515 CE Juliana commissioned a codex known as the Vienna Dioscorides, an illuminated scientific manuscript that features more than 400 pictures of animals and plants rendered in a naturalistic style. In later centuries it was used as a textbook in the imperial hospital of Constantinople; it is now often called the Juliana Anicia Codex by scholars. The full forms and luminous colors of Mayer's watercolors here—toeing the line of illustration but not quite crossing it—resonate with the multihued volumes of her fabric sculptures, which almost feel like abstractions of these very images. Mayer was interested in the graphic novel format and taught it at LaGuardia Community College in New York. Along with her work on Greco-Roman women, she would also illustrate the epic poems *Beowulf* and *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, perhaps the world's long oldest poem. Here, though, in *100 Years*, the frames of Mayer's images are crammed with color and text and line—there is little of the articulated space and absence that the grammar of cartoons and their text-and-image boxes usually rely on. Instead, a rush of visual and textual information attempts to fill in the lives of these women, so integral to history's machinations and continuance, and yet often disappeared in its historical record.

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41. Patricia L. Boyd

Wastebook (excerpt: M to S), 2022

Office paper



42.

Documents, books, and poems

Courtesies:

Katja Autfleger: Galerie Conradi, Hamburg and Galerie Stampa, Basel

Bia Davou: Radio Athènes and Melas Martinos, Greece

Liliane Lijn: Rodeo, London/Piraeus

Rosemary Mayer: Estate of Rosemary Mayer and Gordon Robichaux, New York

Senga Mengudi: Lonti Ebers Collection

Rivane Neuenschwander: Deedie Rose Collection

All the works in the exhibition are courtesy of the artists.