

## WORDS THAT COME WHEN THEY ARE CALLED AND IMAGES WHO CAME TO BE SEEN

### ARTIST STATEMENT AFTER:

In my animations, I am interested in reappropriating motion or the trace of the eye as it follows movement. I work toward the minimal limit of information needed to spark a resemblance or memory, looking to see what the trace reveals when the live moment becomes a video loop. I make the words perform gestures usually performed by a body to invite a more ambivalent way of reading. In this way, I am seeking an affective response that can lead language to enter a tactile space rather than a purely auditory, visual, or analytic one.

In this thesis work, I look for affective affinities inside and between archives. Personal archives touch cultural, church, and historical collections, intent on opening a space between the intimacy of first-person sensory experience and ideologically laden language. Para-relationships, which occur in the context of the internet but also have material consequences outside of this context, ghost the work, haunting the present and inviting ardent followers of true-crime narratives in with dog-whistles and the uninitiated into their first experience of the touch between these images and texts. Education or even the promotion of the specific crime's narrative is neither the purpose of the work nor something it exists comfortably with. By focusing on a single instance, a particular domestic crime, the work hopes to part actions and words, allowing the resonances and sticky generation of violence between language and body to be felt and possibly seen.

**BDSM** is a practice of delination, as such, it also asks to be defined. It translates between the images, language, and the expectations of different bodies and structural positions. When I use the logic of S&M in my work, it is to derive pleasure where it hasn't been directly offered. This opens the question of who is dominant and who is submissive. The stark limitations that characterize existing power relationships can flip, shift, break, or metamorphose when pressure is applied at the fulcrum.

I think about BDSM as a way to make material an existing power relationship in order to then take it to its logical conclusion. Pain, and to some extent, pleasure, are not additive—they are inherent to the power relations themselves. Consent is always present, but it is not always presenced. I am interested in how images and other refusals of flesh and touch can be sites where power relationships become visible. For me, it is through astriction rather than avoidance that I work to find a way through.

This work asks questions about where religiosity and BDSM converge and diverge, and about the difference between violence in familial relationships and the space of consensual pain and pleasure that BDSM invites. For me, a BDSM of the image emphasises the plasticity of consent, while also allowing me to realize continuously how total the image is. Where everything is recognized as emerging from an individual's perspective, the difference between surface and depth is complicated by questions of access. When actions or movements repeat, and their sources are obscured, the causal links that we might project onto relationships also become loose and open for reinterpretation or a fresh experience of such interaction.

What on the **surface of the language** was already always there, and what does an invitation to return to this surface reveal about what is assumed in interpersonal relationships, and what is actively negotiated? Organizing this project around the logic of BDSM opens up what might be predetermined. How softly can an image be touched? In a visual and tactile field where the power play between text and image is interrupted by the interlopers of material and body, opportunities to test this touch abound. I don't seek to reanimate, but to attend. Even within infinite gentleness, eventually all image surfaces break and

disappear. In this way, image capture is not made false through touch, but fails to capture long before one enters to **see** it.

## **ARTIST STATEMENT BEFORE:**

### **LANGUAGE AS **IMAGE****

Language has an ambivalent relationship with me, which means sometimes the door is shut, sometimes it is thrown open, and sometimes the door of language is a shape I only know because I occupy the empty space into which it would be fitted.

The world is evasive for language—yet present—and it is through focus—and singular attention that it can be watched— rupture and scatter.

### **BONDAGE: BODY CONSCIOUSNESS OF LANGUAGE:**

Words hold tight. They do not want to release you—magnetic—sticky with meaning—form finding its form inside a hole. Language blacks out your eyes and stitches your arms to your side— and muffles your ears. And it locks you beneath—and momentary or forever leaves you inside—and you wait in the airport of language alone—if it will arrive back and unbind you--- wash and lightly touch your closed eyelids from above until they open like sinking your teeth slowly through cheese—and you look into what is nothing more that a large capital L—with hands that are not human and are not hands and ink spurts like cuttlefish and when you ask a question there is no mouth to reply.

### **DISCIPLINE, DOMINANCE: EYE CONSCIOUSNESS OF LANGUAGE**

Causality—the world is full of objects and objects are tripwires- touch one and you touch them all—touch none and you still touch—but do not make contact. Objects recede and tell us who and what they are simultaneously. The world is evasive for language—yet present—and it is through focus—and singular attention that it can be watched— rupture and scatter.

### **SUBMISSION, SADISM: LANGUAGE TONGUE CONSCIOUSNESS**

Where is your mother? What kind of mother you had will determine how much space you feel inside that name or how you negotiate your occupation inside it— or maybe that is what tells you the sort of mother you had. Your alienation is determined in that mother-threshold— we make each— alienation, sustenance, wound— what is brighter than the moment where your body is cut out of another's? When we submit, we are saying— you made me, and I know it. We make

each other, without touching, we make each other without meaning, we make each other without speaking, we make each other in our blindness.

### **MASOCHISM: MIND CONSCIOUSNESS OF LANGUAGE**

Forms of being, if not restricted to the capacity to language—or to understand, to think, all forms of access are equal in their incompleteness. Being is a window—like a painting that is both closed and open—its indeterminacy makes it both impossible and imperative to look clearly—we make each other, and yet when we look at one other, we see either the surface or pass through into a fantasy. The need for otherworlds evaporates, only ever looking through the endless windows into what glimpse you thought you caught. The pain from looking into what will not yield intensifies the longer you look, and language has an ambivalent relationship with me, which means sometimes the door is shut, sometimes it is thrown open, and sometimes the door of language is a shape I only know because I occupy the empty space into which it would be fitted.

### **DISCIPLINE, DOMINANCE: EYE CONSCIOUSNESS OF LANGUAGE**

Causality—the world is full of objects and objects are tripwires- touch one and you touch them all—touch none and you still touch—but do not make contact. Objects recede and tell us who and what they are simultaneously. Language takes a cotton-gloved finger and presses on just the right spot. A voluntary drowning, a cup full, a cut-me-first so liveness can appear, a drip me

into it sensation—but language has only one being which is outside of all human culture—and when language returns to sit in it's cave and watch the world through the dark—without eyes—it wants to close itself to find it's own borders to know its own shape and where its vastness touches the outside—but instead it only senses that even as it makes itself smaller what is most interior to it. shrinks inside.

### **LANGUAGE MAKES RULES FOR ITSELF**

It can only touch objects with the back side of its hand one week,

It can only drink water next,

Walking meditation each morning and night for one week,

The next week it must eat everything it is offered– no spitting out into a napkin, swallowing firmly

Then, it decides it cannot fantasize about becoming a monastic anymore–  
because it recognizes something that it cannot quite give up,

It must conform to an institutional rhythm, and then later it must fall out into its own stricter timetable

The one rule it keeps trying to follow but can't is a restriction that tells it to stop offering up difference—to discontinue its meaning-making scheme

## **WORD EAR CONSCIOUSNESS**

And exhausting itself— language lays listening for some sign of itself— a mirror image of its own stretched forms— wondering if what is left to give up is the very idea of its own threshold— an alienation, that is as conditioned and fleeting and as laden with as much motivation to grasp— as transformable—as something curled into the well of language's own ear— waiting to enter— but not needing to be let in.