

# Institute of Contemporary Arts

PRESS RELEASE

Morag Keil

30 January to 14 April 2019

Opening Tuesday 29 January, 6–8pm

Press view Tuesday 29 January, 10am–1pm



Morag Keil, *Controllers*, 2018.

Courtesy the artist and Jenny's, Los Angeles. Photo: Ed Mumford

The Institute of Contemporary Arts presents the first major solo exhibition by Scottish, London-based artist, Morag Keil, spanning the past eight years of the artist's career. The exhibition includes new and existing works, reconceived for this presentation.

Keil works in installation, film, painting and drawing, and often collaborates with fellow artists. Her work frequently adopts a lo-fi, pared back aesthetic, incorporating everyday objects and found materials, alongside digital innovations that affect domestic life, such as home automation.

Throughout her varied practice, Keil appropriates and re-presents aspects of branding strategies from advertisements and social media platforms, to investigate and expose pervasive techniques for influencing consumerist desire. She also explores how visual and aural strategies, such as those used in computer gaming or commercial environments, are used to manipulate behaviour in ways that are premised on clichéd notions of how gender is performed. Conceptually, Keil's rejection of the hierarchies of value attached to art production is realised in the artist's refusal to overproduce, while recognising this as an ever-present imperative.

A key work exhibited is a remodelled version of *Passive Aggressive* (2016–present), a video comprising clips from animated advertisements, the opening sequence to Big Brother and close-up footage of motorbikes parked on the street. These glimpses into real and simulated worlds evoke notions of fantasy and freedom; the passive camera viewpoint juxtaposed with the latent aggression of the machines.

Also on display is *Potpourri* (2013), a single-channel video streamed online from a computer workstation installed in the gallery. Alternating images of a young woman and man in a flat, and drive-by scenes of a moped with two riders, are overlaid with a text read by male and female voices constructed from a variety of sources, such as Instagram comments and a statement for members of a porn-related social media site. This central script connects Keil's subjective examination of the influence these platforms have on how we present ourselves and stage identity, and how, in turn, we are perceived.

In these and other works, Keil explores the impact of data-capitalism on contemporary subjectivities while acknowledging how these are affected by the precarity of everyday realities, such as labour and wealth inequality. In bringing together a substantial body of work, this exhibition aims to show how Keil's practice offers one of the most insightful and eloquent considerations of how a world increasingly mediated by technology and digital communication is impacting on our day-to-day existence.

Morag Keil was born in Edinburgh in 1985 and studied at the Glasgow School of Art. Keil's solo exhibitions include *Here We Go Again*, Project Native Informant, London; *Controllers, Jenny's*, Los Angeles (2018); *passive aggressive 2*, Real Fine Arts, New York; *A Solo Show*, New Bretagne Belle Aire, Essen; *passive aggressive*, Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin (2016); *L.I.B.E.R.T.Y.*, Project Native Informant, London; *Would you eat your friends?* Real Fine Arts, New York (2014); *Potpourri*, Cubitt, London; *Palais de Token*, Neue Alte Bruecke, Frankfurt (2013); *Civil War*, Outpost, Norwich (2012); *Virginia Ham*, Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen; *Moarg Kiel*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris; and *Public Hanging*, Focal Point Gallery, Southend-on-Sea (all 2011). In 2010, Keil received the Prix Lafayette at FIAC in Paris. She has also presented collaborative exhibitions including with Georgie Nettell, *Questionnaire*, Yale Union, Portland (2017); with Ed Lehan and Georgie Nettell, *Telephone*, Jenny's, Los Angeles (2015); and with Georgie Nettell, *Punks not Dead It's Different*, Frieze London with Project Native Informant (2015). Keil is represented by Project Native Informant, London; Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin; and Jenny's, Los Angeles.

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