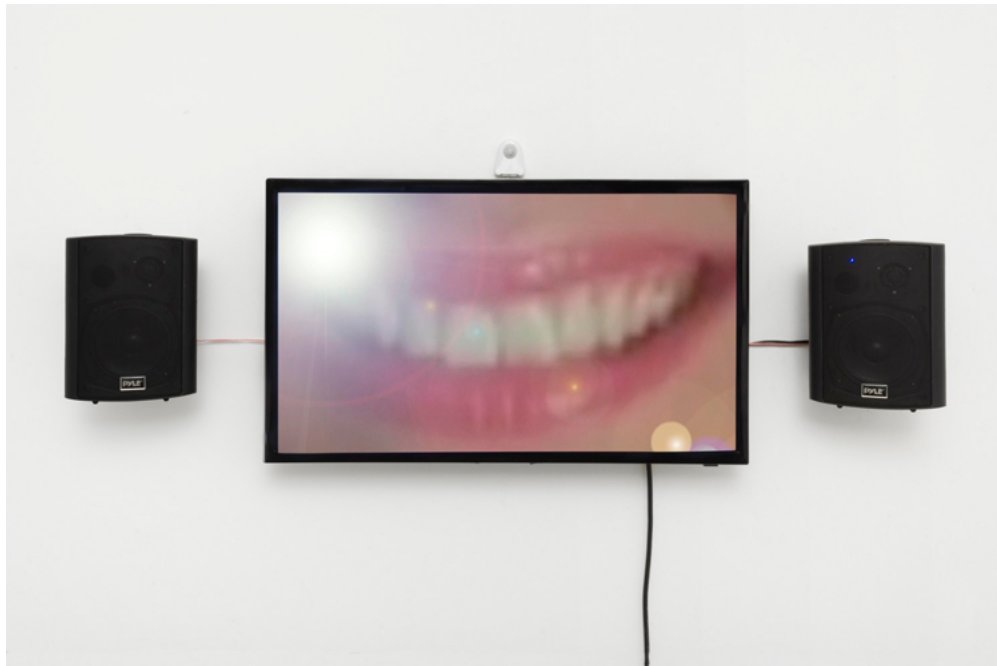


# Institute of Contemporary Arts

PRESS RELEASE

Morag Keil  
*Moarg Kiel*

30 January – 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 *Moarg Kiel*, the first major solo exhibition by London-based Scottish artist Morag Keil. The exhibition revisits key works from the past eight years of the artist's career, centring on four major installations that have been reconceived and remade for this presentation and are now brought together for the first time. The exhibition presents these works alongside new paintings and lesser-known earlier 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. 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

foregrounds and subverts visual and aural strategies exploited in computer gaming or commercial environments in order to manipulate behaviour in ways 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.

The exhibition opens with *Dizzy* (2019), which explores the use of public and private spaces, and includes London Tube seats, a papier-mâché model house and a film shot in a UK department store that presents as an IRL computer game devoid of any rules and appearing to have no beginning nor end. *Closer* (2010), a kinetic sculpture comprising the working parts of a sex machine, accompanies the installation, providing a relentless rhythm that echoes the large clock at the other end of the gallery. Also in the Lower Gallery 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 viewpoint of the camera 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 ICA's Upper 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.

*Shopping* (2019) explores how the zoning of sound is engineered to determine the use of space and influence consumerist behaviour, for example in the supermarket or the shopping mall. Played through separate channels, the audio is compiled from disparate sources: an early *Tekken* video game (with its dramatic characterisations of masculinity and femininity), a recording of a rollercoaster ride, and personalised pop-up ads. The deliberately clumsy attempt to create separate zones through 'fake' directional speakers is set up to fail, as the soundtracks collide to produce a cacophony.

Screening daily in Cinema 2 at 12:30pm is a re-edited version of *Questionnaire* (2017/19), a film made by Morag Keil and Georgie Nettell that was originally commissioned for a shared exhibition at Yale Union, Portland in 2017. To create the work, the artists interviewed twenty-four people with an identical set of questions that had been compiled from various 'getting to know you' quizzes posted on Yahoo! Answers, and from questionnaires on the OkCupid website and in the *Evening Standard* magazine. Audio of the interviewee's answers is accompanied by everyday scenes of public and domestic life. The film highlights the increasing presence and influence of public opinion surveys and polls and questions how people become data for political opinion formation and marketing purposes.

In bringing together a substantial body of work, this exhibition aims to show how Keil's practice offers an insightful and eloquent consideration of how our day-to-day existence is increasingly mediated by technology and digital communication.

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

#### Public Programme

15 February: *Automation and the Home*, a panel discussion chaired by Helen Hester on the future of the home

28 February: *Jamaica!! Meets Sly & The Family Drone*, an evening of performance and music presented by The Gate, an arts and resource centre for artists with learning disabilities

ICA Public Advisors offer guided tours throughout the run of the exhibition.

Further dates to be announced, please visit the ICA website for information [www.ica.art](http://www.ica.art)

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