

## “The Right to Opacity”

### Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz

10 September - 13 October, 2016

Opening reception for the artists: 18:00-20:00, Saturday 10 September, 2016

Curated by Asakusa

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ASAKUSA is delighted to announce the opening of "The Right to Opacity", the first solo exhibition in Japan by Berlin-based artist duo, by Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz. Working together since 2007, the artists produce film installations that step in and out of suppressed or illegible moments, staging the actions of individuals and groups living—indeed thriving—in defiance of normality, law, and economics. Sourced from materials such as archival photographs, texts, music scores, and film reels excavated from the past, their "queer archaeology" revisits critical moments. Through their performances for the camera, Boudry / Lorenz seek to upset normative historical narratives as figures across time are staged, projected and layered.

The exhibition features their recent work Opaque (2014), filmed inside the remnants of an old public swimming pool. Within the film, two performers, claimed to be representatives of an underground organization, appear behind the layers of curtains that separate the outside from the inside, while emphasizing their presence of anonymity. Once the curtain is removed, another curtain appears. One of them features a pink zebra, which fuses the war technique of camouflage with the stylishness of queer-outfits and becomes a showcase for the entrance of large amounts of smoke. The dense smoke alludes to the aftermath of bombings—or a signal during political demonstrations. Later a speech is delivered, based on the text The Declared Enemy (1970), written by Jean Genet during his devoted support for Black Power and the Palestinians. It portrays a faultless and subjugated enemy, whose position he assumes to replace.

In the performance, this desire for a communion with the declared enemy is embodied through the speech act of reading Genet's text. Publicly voicing their desire has been an important means of protest in the political movement. In the film, the two performers continue lip-synching with nuanced gestures, as the recorded voice-over is consummated and the curtains are removed one by one. The structure of the narrative is disrupted within this intricate language practice. As the opaqueness of their identity reinterprets the text, the imaginary enemy extends its boundary to the viewers, and addresses a polemical question to the audience to accept the unknowable Other or the declared enemy.

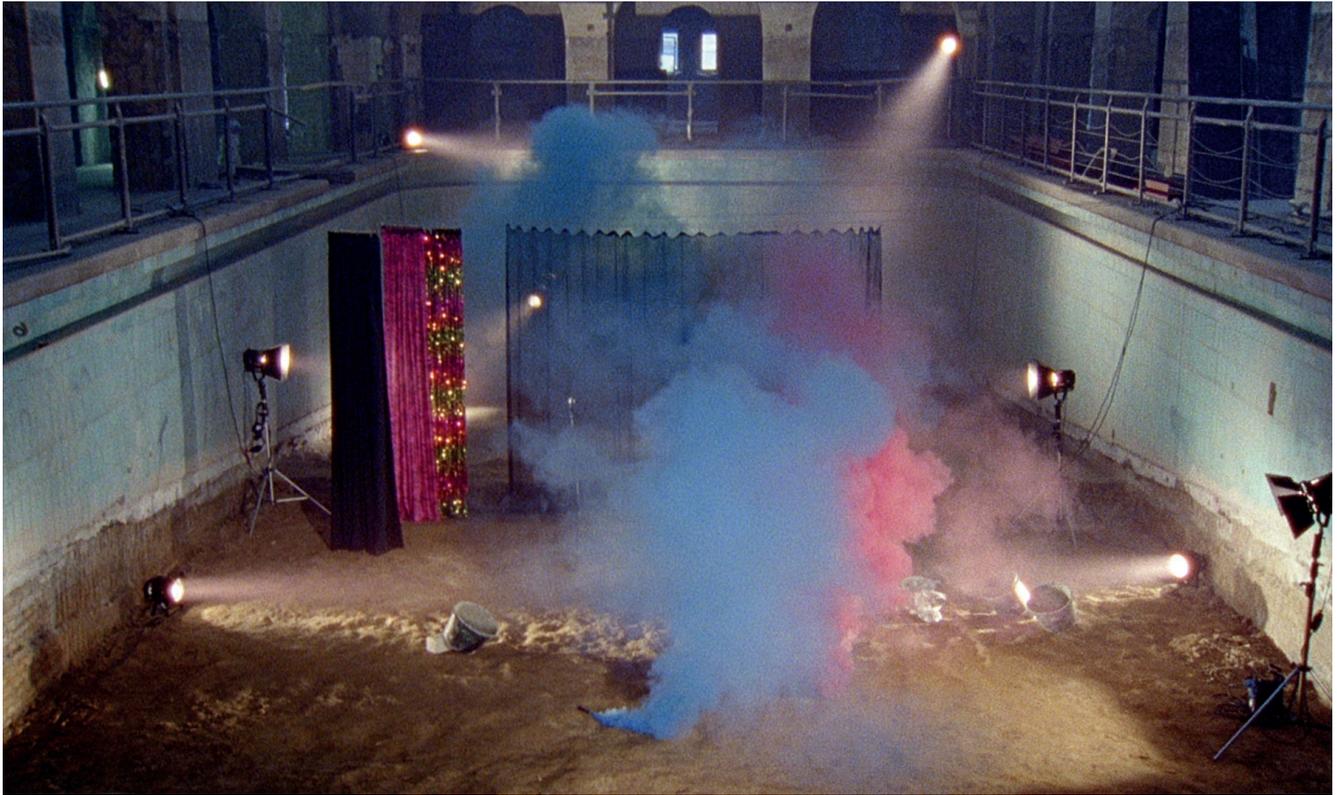
The title of the exhibition "The Right to Opacity" also references the term developed by Martinique poet Édouard Glissant. According to Glissant, to produce clarity and transparency of thought, one has to reduce the texture of diverse realities to a scale of conceptual measurements. Glissant deemed it an aggression and claimed for a right not to be understood. "The Right to Opacity" therefore demands for hospitality for the Other, in opposition to the urge for transparency that is pervasive in global media and culture.

With the prevalent hostile practice of classifying differences today, the exhibition asks: Do the curtains and fumes grant "The Right to Opacity" to the bodies that they mask and disguise? Or do they blur the dividing lines between same and other, between accomplices and enemies? How is it possible to accept the unknowable Other or the declared enemy in its rawness?

"The Right to Opacity" has been realised thanks to Marcelle Alix Gallery, Paris.

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The work Opaque (2014), with performance by Werner Hirsch and Ginger Brooks Takahashi, was premiered at Berlinale in February 2015 (Forum Expanded), and was shown at Kunsthalle Vienna, Kunsthalle Zürich and Nottingham Contemporary.



Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz: Opaque (2014), video installation, Super 16 mm / HD, 10 mins.

*J.G. seeks, or goes in search of, or would like to find—or never to find—the delicious disarmed enemy whose balance is off, whose profile is vague, whose face is unacceptable, the enemy knocked down by the slightest puff of air, the already humiliated slave, throwing himself out of a window when the sign is given, the enemy who has been beaten: blind, deaf, mute. No arms, no legs, no belly, no heart, no sex, no head: in sum, a complete enemy, already bearing the marks of my bestiality, which—being too lazy— would no longer have to make any effort. I want the total enemy, one who would hate me beyond all bounds and in all his spontaneity, but the subjected enemy, beaten by me before ever laying eyes on me. And irreconcilable with me in any case. No friends. Especially no friends: an enemy declared but not divided. Clean edges, no cracks. What colors? A very tender green like a cherry with effervescent purple. His stature? Between the two of us, let him present himself to me man to man. No friends. I seek a faltering enemy, on the verge of giving up. I'll give him all I've got: blows, slaps, kicks, I'll have him gnawed by starving foxes, I'll make him eat English food, attend the House of Lords, be received at Buckingham Palace, fuck Prince Philip, get fucked by him, live for a month in London, dress like me, sleep where I sleep, live in my stead: I seek the declared enemy.*

Jean Genet, 1970

Source: Genet, Jean. [The Declared Enemy: Text and Interviews](#). Edited by Albert Dichy and Translated by Jeff Fort. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003. Print. p1.

## Artists:

**Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz** (b. 1972, Lausanne/Berlin, b. 1963, Berlin) live in Berlin and have worked together since 2007. They produce film installations that step in and out of suppressed or illegible moments, staging the actions of individuals and groups living – indeed thriving – in defiance of normality, law and economics. They produce performances for the camera, which upset normative historical narratives, as figures across time are staged, projected and layered.

Their work Opaque (2014), with performance by Werner Hirsch and Ginger Brooks Takahashi premiered at Berlinale in February 2015 (Forum Expanded), and was shown at Kunsthalle Vienna, Kunsthalle Zürich and Nottingham Contemporary.

Previous works include To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, In Recognition of their Desperation (2013), based on the eponymous 1970 score by avant-garde feminist composer Pauline Oliveros. It had its premiere exhibition as part of their solo show "Patriarchal Poetry" at Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe in Autumn 2013, and was shown at Museum of Modern Art, New York, in a special event with the artists, Oliveros and Gregg Bordowitz in May 2014. Toxic (2012), with performances by Werner Hirsch and Ginger Brooks Takahashi, commissioned for "Intense Proximity", Paris La Triennale, 2012; No Future, No Past, commissioned by Andrea Thal for the Swiss off-site project, "Chewing The Scenery", Venice Biennale, 2011.

Recent retrospectives and solo exhibitions include: "Two video works", Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven, 2015; "In Memoriam of Identity", Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, 2015; "Loving, Repeating", Kunsthalle Vienna, 2015; "Portrait of an Eye", Kunsthalle Zürich, 2015; "Patriarchal Poetry", Badischer Kunstverein, 2013; "Aftershow", CAPC, Bordeaux, 2013; "Toxic Play in Two Acts", South London Gallery, 2012; "Contagieux! Rapports contre la normalité", Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneve, 2011.

Their work has been written about by writers and critics including Gregg Bordowitz, Laura Guy, Antke Engel, Nana Adusei-Poku and Mathias Danbolt. They just published the catalogue I Want, with Sternberg Press, 2016, Aftershow with Sternberg Press, 2014 as well as Temporal Drag, by Hatje Cantz in 2011.

They are currently participating the 11th Gwandju Biennale 2016, curated by Maria Lind.

www.boudry-lorenz.de

## Curator:

**Asakusa** is a 40-square-meter exhibition venue for contemporary art programmes committed to advancing curatorial collaborations and practices. Since its inauguration in October 2015, the gallery has worked with Mikhail Karikis, Héctor Zamora, and Oliver Beer. Asakusa held the archival exhibition "1923" tracing the footsteps of early Japanese avant-garde in the 1920s, with a particular focus on the influence of Dada in Tokyo, which paved way to the Proletariat Art in the 1930s. Their most recent exhibition, "Radical Democracy" with Thomas Hirschhorn & Santiago Sierra, was co-curated with Dr. Masaru Araki, Okayama University.

## Exhibition Facts:

Title: "The Right to Opacity"  
Artists: Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz  
Curated by: Asakusa

Dates: 10 September - 13 October, 2016  
Venue: Asakusa  
Location: 1-6-16 Nishi-Asakusa, Taito, Tokyo  
Opening hours: Thur. 19:00 - 22:00,  
Sat. & Sun. 12:00 - 19:00

Opening reception for the artists:  
18:00-20:00, Saturday 10 September 2016

URL: www.asakusa-o.com  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/asakusa.o/>  
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