

FEMINIST LAND ART RETREAT

Heavy Flow: The Re-Release

Mar 3 - Apr 8 2017

Ginerva Gambino is pleased to announce the solo exhibition "Heavy Flow: The Re-Release" by Feminist Land Art Retreat. The Canadian duo will show their video work "Heavy Flow" (2015) and a group of corresponding film posters made in 2016. A limited T-shirt edition, published on the occasion of this show, will complete a product range similar to those marketed by the film industry.

"Heavy Flow" was Feminist Land Art Retreat's contribution to "We are a Parasite on the Institution of Cinema, An Institution of Parasites: First Studio for Propositional Cinema Film Festival" at MUMOK in Vienna. The work juxtaposes found footage of lava flowing through various landscapes with a female voice giving advice to young actors or professionals on how to take a head shot. The video ends with the song "Advances in Success" by Will Powers.

A typical element of Werner Herzog's documentary films – he has already made three about volcanos – is the voice-over narration. In the trailer for his latest production (2016, with Netflix) he announces: "To the heavens soared the hurtling flames of the mighty gods, the engulfing doom. (...) It is a fire that wants to burst forth. And it could not care less about what we are doing up here." In his dramatic description he ascribes higher powers to the natural phenomenon and depicts it as a constant threat to life on earth.

The voice-over in "Heavy Flow" begins with the phrase "Create an image..." The narration follows the structure of a self-help tape laying out do-it-yourself methods for constructing a successful self-portrait, useful for both the aspiring actor and the young professional putting together a social media profile. As the voice guides us, depictions of lava follow various modes of cinematic representation – documentary, portraiture, drama, sci-fi, action – to give an overview of this uncontrollable subject. One begins to project human emotions, traits, moods and personalities into the amorphous matter as it crawls slowly or violently shoots out of the earth.

The female narrator constantly warns about possible mistakes and misconceptions when presenting oneself. Every piece of advice comes with a snide comment – e.g. "Capture your personality, but don't be too eccentric. You don't want to be limited." In this minefield of self-representation, constraint and conformity seem to be the safest route. Meanwhile, in the images we see a material that is dangerous and cannot be tamed.

The film posters for "Heavy Flow" (Watercolor and UV ink on digital print, 152 x 102 cm each), made last year for a group show at JTT Gallery in New York City, have been scaled to standard bus-stop movie advertisements. Like commercial film posters, the name of the film, the directors and the producers are listed together with ratings and reviews, recommending the passerby to go and watch the film. The recurring image in the four versions is of lava flowing down and over the whole of the poster. Reminiscent of advertisements for horror and splatter movies, the red substance could also represent blood. The posters humorously reinforce the association previously provoked by the title of the video work itself.

In previous years Feminist Land Art Retreat has released various forms of promotional material for public circulation such as posters, t-shirts, tights, and temporary tattoos. In fact, the founding of FLAR goes back to a poster that was made in 2010: an advertisement in the style of protest posters for a rumored upcoming retreat with two mirrored upside-down images of Robert Smithson's Spiral Jetty. But rather than re-performing the familiar utopia of an actual retreat, the duo's focus subsequently shifted to the creation of an imaginative space. Using humor, language, as well as commercial and art historical imagery, Feminist Land Art Retreat reveals familiar misconceptions of what Feminism looks like.

Feminist Land Art Retreat's works have been shown in the following institutions and galleries: Kunsthaus Bregenz Billboards, Bregenz; Studio For Propositional Cinema, Düsseldorf; Kestnergessellschaft Hannover, Hannover; Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf; JTT Gallery, New York; Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach; Künstlerhaus Bremen, Bremen; Mumok, Wien; Kunstverein München, Munich et. al.