Hand and Mind

Alex Cecchetti, Liz Magic Laser, Hanne Lippard, Jesper List Thomsen, and Hagar Tenenbaum

Hand and Mind is an exhibition and series of performances testing connections between the realms of speech and gesture. Artists Alex Cecchetti, Liz Magic Laser, Jesper List Thomsen, Hagar Tenenbaum and Hanne Lippard *embody* language and thought. Through painting, sculpture, choreography and performance they unsettle political, personal and theoretical channels of communication.

Every meaning that we transmit and receive is shaped by our bodies. We mediate communication sensorially in a complex and sometimes unconscious system of reflexes. Spoken language and physical gesture are expressed by separate parts of our bodies, but — at least in Western cultures — social forces often undo their communicative synthesis. The works in 'Hand and Mind' alter our perception of these dynamics, or even project us outside them.

Liz Magic Laser's *Primal Scream* draws on Primal Therapy, a radical 1970s coaching technique that encourages patients to reenact scenes from their past to physically and vocally express inhibited feelings. The soft grey padded walls and therapeutic devices – an instructional video, punching pillows in the shape of party political emblems, and a vessel to scream into – become the setting and tools for participants to use during Political Therapy Workshops. Participants accesses the potential of movement to alter psychological perceptions of lived experiences. The work suggests itself as a timely outlet for those discontent with institutional, racial, or gender politics.

Alex Cecchetti has worked closely with a professional dancer to study and document her movements. This has informed the shape of sculptural handrails in wood. Visitors to the exhibition are invited to touch the handrails with their eyes closed. Following the subtly ascending and descending curves they are lead to execute classical ballet movements such as 'arabesque' or 'pirouette'. Cecchetti will present a new performance title *Conversation of the Arrows* amongst the sculptures on the opening night with dancer and choreographer Pauline Simon. This will be Simon's debut in the UK.

The boys the girls and the political by Jesper List Thomsen is a series of paintings that uses language as a starting point. They are constructed by layering clear PVC, treated with a variety of industrial paints, tapes and pens. Depicting abstract bodily forms arranged over a rigorous structure of marks quoting: X; the paintings suggest a movement from the bureaucratic to the lived, from the rigid to the ingenious. They stage a dialectic and talks of the inevitable disposition of the political as a state of being.

List Thomsen's Perspex holders act as a form of infrastructure for the paintings during the exhibition. When *The boys the girls and the political* is placed within a Perspex holder the painting grabs the title as an extension to its existing title. The titles are first person utterances, as well as fictive backronyms, using the apparel brands; Nike, Puma and Adidas. The title types allows for linguistic-mashups when in circulation, much like how desperate bits of language might come together in an online context, when images and quotes are being reposted and perpetuated.

PERFORMANCES, WORKSHOPS, READINGS

Friday 3 February, 6–9pm
OPENING NIGHT PERFORMANCES

ALEX CECCHETTI WITH PAULINE SIMON
Conversation of the Arrows
 Grand Union (6.30pm & 8.15pm)

Conversation of the Arrows by Alex Cecchetti is a choreography for sorcerer's apprentices, in which a dancer and a word-crafter fall into the trap of representation. They are doomed to chase each other represented as dogs, arrows, birds, stones, stars. For a moment, Cecchetti's sculptures, become the spells that the apprentices cast against each other and the scenario for their labyrinthic roaming.

HAGAR TENENBAUM
Abstraction end and things like that
Nicholson School of Dance (7.30pm)

In this performance, hand gestures, speech and gaze have distinct trajectories, which synchronise and resist each other at different moments. Every action is titled and described minimally. Her movement finds its way between accumulated words and stories, memories and facts, challenging the moving body to stay receptive, attentive and, at the same time, independent.

Saturday 18 February and Saturday 11 March, 10.30am, Grand Union
LIZ MAGIC LASER
Political Therapy Workshops
Workshops devised by Liz Magic Laser, led by drama therapist Louise Platt

Group therapy and meditation methods will be used to elicit the connections between personal experiences and political beliefs. Laser has enlisted drama therapist and actress Louise Platt to guide participants through activities to facilitate the expression and release of frustrations associated with Brexit and world events at large.

Thursday 16 March, 6.30pm Grand Union
JESPER LIST THOMSEN AND HANNE LIPPARD
Bodies Saying Words
An evening of poetry readings on *embodied* language

Avoiding The Genius by Jesper List Thomsen is a piece of writing to be read. To be re-embodied. Using language, and a strategy of accumulation, to lift eight sculptures from their original site in the Villa Giulia, Palermo, Sicily; *Avoiding The Genius* is made up of nice parts that brings a historical analogy to a contemporary body. Aware of the body as a site of both semantic and gestural potential, the reading will channel and elaborate – not interpret what so blatantly calls for interpretation.

c u l8tr elevator by Hanne Lippard is a performance that deals with formality in communication and excessive excuses, deriving from the discussion about women being overly apologetic and discrete, and the make-up of politeness in language.