

# Not-writings

## 23 - 31 March 2018

### Deptford Does Art, London

**“Not-writings” is an occasion to present a publication about the experience of Ferrara Residency 2017 and to show new work by Athene Greig and Karolina Mikeskova. The exhibition, curated by Angelica Bollettinari and Lucie Kordacova, will also be animated by various appointments:**

**#23.03.2018, 8.30pm, performance by Entschuldigung from Rat Run Records**

**#25.03.2018, 5.30pm, reading session organised by Sandi Hudson-Francis**

**Organised with the support of sixtysevendecollective and res/ina.**

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In her text “Not Writing” Anne Boyer lists, over a few pages, a series of texts that she has, simply, not written. These include personal narratives, various intellectual and philosophical books, novels and poetry in a variety of styles; she is “not writing” conference papers, contemporary art reviews or accounts of her travels. None of these are realised because the necessities of everyday life make writing difficult, almost impossible at times, as a working class woman and a single mother, living in Kansas, US. Paid work, care work, the time spent dealing with social situations and expectations, family and relationships... Thus, whilst not writing science fiction novels or memoirs, nor histories of past or current times, the hours spent in the production of “not writing” accumulate. Working, driving her daughter to school and back, reading, dealing with anxiety, having sex, not having sex, talking to people, shopping, reading and so on - the list of the activities that constitute and reproduce life grows daily. Yet, in the act of “not writing”, Boyer is indeed writing lines embedded most importantly with the desire to write, which materialises in this act of “not-doing” yet doing, an act that allows her to defy the obstacles encountered.

The title of the exhibition is a reference and homage to Boyer’s text as it continues to speak so well to the theme of *Ferrara Residency 2017: Who Cares?*, and the subsequent catalogue launched on the opening night. The aim of the residency programme in September 2017 was to reflect, together with the participating artists and curators, on the conditions of work and creative research as cultural practitioners and artists today, and in particular on how to think and re-think the care and emotional labor that are bound within it. Feminist writings on social reproduction, such as those by Silvia Federici, have since the 1970s provided acute analyses of women’s work under capitalism, and how it has always been unreliable, unstable, and mostly unpaid, with its basis predominantly in acts of loving and caring. Reflecting on these texts we drew parallels on how these analyses still speak to the contemporary moment, and to our situation as precarious workers in the arts. On Sunday the 25th of March, as part of the exhibition, and as a continuation of the conversations initiated during our time in Ferrara, artist Sandi Hudson-Francis hosted an informal meeting in the gallery space to explore texts by Jo Spence, a British photographer, writer and cultural worker. The documents displayed her engagement with the feminist collective *The Hackney Flashers* in the 70s, to her later writing on illness, self-care and “photo-therapy”.

By taking a certain gaze, Boyer’s lines also resonate with the way of working that Athene Greig and Karolina Mikeskova adopt, who have recently made new work for the exhibition, as

their practices continue to celebrate and highlight the processes inherent to making itself. With her work, rooted in painting, Athene draws upon materials such as a plastic tablecloth, cotton and linen cuts, painting quickly and defiantly so as to achieve feelings of lightness, tension, fragility and gesture. Karolina, whose practice focuses mainly on photography and installation, uses materials and objects that are part of our everyday, imbuing them with new life, whereby chance and unpredictability are conjured so as to create objects that defy our common ideas of usefulness and productivity. In this sense the act of “not writing” can be seen in the work of these artists, as an act less concerned with knowing in advance what to say, make (or write), and more with a commitment to the present moment of production itself. The time of “not writing” (yet writing), becomes a way of actively finding the meaning of something whilst either doing, or not doing, it; here failures and anomalies become intrinsic to the process, embracing the quasi-control you hold over the way materials react or behave when working with them.

This exhibition forms another step in the Ferrara Residency project. Since forming in September 2017 we have become committed to collaborating and supporting each other throughout the year through various events and conversations. Leading up to our second residency programme in September 2018, we will continue to experiment with collective practices that have the possibility to alleviate the exhaustion, individualism and anxiety we believe to be so prevalent within our lives under networked capitalism. To think with Boyer one last time, it will be the not-writing, the not-producing, the not-expecting and the not-knowing, where we feel we may get furthest in these ways of understanding how to be together differently, whether politically, culturally, or personally.

--- By Lucrezia Lay



Shot from reading session on Sun 25th @ Deptford Does Art



*There are years, days, hours, minutes, weeks, moments, and other measures of time spent in the production of “not writing.” Not writing is working, and when not working at paid work working at unpaid work like caring for others, and when not at unpaid work like caring, caring also for a human body, and when not caring for a human body many hours, weeks, years, and other measures of time spent caring for the mind in a way like reading or learning and when not reading and learning also making things (like garments, food, plants, artworks, decorative items) and when not reading and learning and working and making and caring and worrying also politics, and when not politics also the kind of medication which is consumption, of sex mostly or drunkenness, cigarettes, drugs, passionate love affairs, cultural products, the internet also, then time spent staring into space that is not a screen, also all the time spent driving, particularly here where it is very long to get anywhere, and then to work and back, to take her to school and back, too.*

(Anne Boyer, “Not Writing” in *Garments Against Women*, Mute Books, 2016)



“Not-Writings”, installation view, Deptford Does Art. London

## Artists' bios

**Athene Greig** is a London based artist. Her practice is rooted in painting but the work also takes the form of installation and sound. She holds a BA(hons) Fine Art, Painting from the Glasgow School of Art. From 2015-17 she took part on the Turps Studio Programme, London. Whilst at Turps she was selected by DOLPH projects to present a solo exhibition at Sluice 2017. Group exhibitions include: Odd Space, Hewing Wittare, London, 2018; a bath of self-esteem, Galleria del Carbone, Ferrara, Italy, 2017; Turps end of year show, Art Bermondsey Project Space, London, 2017; Creekside Open 2017 selected by Alison Wilding, APT Gallery, Deptford; London Open 2015, Whitechapel Gallery, London.

**Karolina Mikeskova** is an artist based in London and Prague. She is interested in objects that form part of our cultural symbolism and whose presence somehow exceeds mere practical use. In her practice, consisting mainly of installation and photography, she focuses on the transformation of manufactured products into artefacts, as well as exploring the frontier that separates artificiality from natural origin. Recent exhibitions include: a bath of self-esteem, Gate/Porta, Ferrara, Italy, 2017; La Cascata, Il Turco, Ferrara, Italy, 2017; Watching a Strange Theatre, Deptford X Gallery, 2017; The Deptford X Fringe (Award winner, 2016); Inner Monologue / Eternal Desire, Backroom, London, 2016; Kuba Export, City Surfer Office, Prague, 2015. Her work has been featured in the exhibitions: Monument, CCC Gallery, Beijing, 2016; Essl Art Award, FUTURA, Prague, 2015.

**Sandi Hudson-Francis** is an artist based in London. She is interested in exploring issues dealing with race, identity, class, gender and age, using a variety of techniques: photography, sound, drawing and making. Recently, she has been developing a project around the Walworth area of South East London, in particular Elephant & Castle, observing the fast pace of the everchanging city and working to preserve some of its people's histories, which might otherwise be lost. Recent exhibitions include: a bath of self-esteem, Galleria del Carbone, Ferrara, Italy, 2017; MINOTAUR MAZE, The Crypt, Brixton, 2017.