

juliette jongma
gerard doustraat 128a
NL - 1073 vx amsterdam
T/f +31(0)20 463 69 04
info@juliettejongma.com
www.juliettejongma.com

Front Space #2

funny how forever, feels now

**group exhibition with
Mehraneh Atashi
Ivan Cheng
Sophie Lee**

Galerie Juliette Jongma is happy to announce the group exhibition *funny how forever, feels now*, with works by Mehraneh Atashi, Ivan Cheng and Sophie Lee.

funny how forever, feels now takes place in the front space of the gallery, merging with the solo exhibition of Ceel Mogami de Haas, *I hunt among stones*. A major part of this solo exhibition consists of wall panels in which de Haas meticulously engraves and cuts out different forms, such as sausages (as mouths), intestines (as hands), and words, thereby linking language to digestion. The forms recur in multiple panels and invite for an iconographic interpretation.

funny how forever, feels now departs from somewhere between the work by de Haas and the absurd YouTube channel 'Cooking with Dog', an invocation of which closes the performance that will open the merged exhibition. Thematically, *funny how forever, feels now* suggests the incomprehensible and excremental structure of language and places iconography—the traditional system of images used to convey particular meaning—in the present-day. The works on view often combine new and traditional technologies, such as smartphone photography with relief or digital drawing with weaving, patchwork and inlay, in deliberate shifts of embodiment and form.

The title *funny how forever, feels now* comes from a series of songs entrusted to Ivan Cheng by composer Marcus Whale. The words appear in a song as part of the performance *Copernican Coining*, which Cheng will perform at the opening as a modified solo. Next to the performance, Cheng presents a sculpture and video, all dealing with language. The sculpture *Neck (2018)* is a wind chime with a hair embroidered plush figure as wind catcher. Upon request, the gallery staff will sing a song to the sculpture, also composed by Whale from an earlier performance by Cheng. The sculpture and the situation is preoccupied with possession and seizure.

The video work *changing room 2 (2018)* - installed in the gallery's lavatory - selects fragments of Cheng's recent performance works using texts to possess the bodies of the performers. In the video these fragments punctuate a recent guitar performance by Julia Reidy at Cheng's studio/exhibition space bologna.cc. The work shifts between language as something possessive, excremental and incomprehensible.

Inspired by depictions of Saint Francis preaching to birds, Mehraneh Atashi has been invited to show a work which includes an iconography of birds and other animals. *Lapis Lazuli play ground (2017)* depicts a basketball court with monkeys, deer and birds. The animals are part of an ongoing project Atashi started in 2016. Each represents a different role within her work: for example, the deer as the hunted object or the monkey as the playful role. Within an endless variety of materials Atashi playfully repositions the symbolic animal figures. In her recent works they keep recurring, from the size of a basketball court to the size of a clothing tag, using patchwork, weaving and printing on glass, fabric and sticker. Rather than a direct use of language towards non-human figures, as in the case of Saint Francis, poodle Francis or Ivan Cheng's sculpture, Atashi's work creates a more subtle dialogue.

Sophie Lee presents a part of *Cultural Producers (2016-18)*: a series of ceramic reliefs depicting figures engaged in familiar activities, such as drinking, dancing, posing or dj-ing. The work draws on the artist's interest in traditional depictions of labour from facades of public buildings. These depictions often contain an iconography of attributes by which the type of labour can be recognised. Rather than universal depictions Lee uses personal imagery of her surroundings. The traditionally crafted reliefs resemble both little paintings and Instagram snapshots. Similarly to how frieze reliefs contain an iconography with a strong narrative potential, our daily snapshots create a narrative of our day-to-day life.

funny how forever, feels now is curated by Titus Nouwens

Special thanks to Ivan Cheng and Ceel Mogami de Haas

Artists' bios:

Mehraneh Atashi (1980) is an Iranian artist living and working in Amsterdam. Since her BFA education in photography in Tehran, and her post-graduate education at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam, she has developed a body of work consisting of assemblages, sculpture, photography and video. Shifting between conceptualism and materiality, imagery and iconography, her work addresses systems of power and concepts of gaze. Her work is awarded with the Mondrian Stipendium for Established Artists in 2014, and presented in experimental solo and group exhibitions at Hit Gallery, Bratislava (SK), Living Art Museum, Reykjavic (IS), Tanja Wagner, Berlin (DE) and De Appel, Amsterdam (NL). Upcoming exhibitions at M HKA, Antwerp (BE), Grazer Kunstverein, Graz (AT) and Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg (AT).

Ivan Cheng (1991) is an Australian artist whose practice focuses on modes of reading, often gesturing toward systems of power and reproduction. He also works as a performer, clarinettist, and dramaturg in multiple contexts, specialising in contemporary scores. He recently completed an MFA in Critical Studies (Sandberg Instituut, Amsterdam), having previously studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London and Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Text-based performances have been presented in Sydney, London, Amsterdam, Vilnius, Tokyo, Berlin and New York. In 2018, he premiered Biscuit Betrayal, a new work for Campbelltown Arts Centre, and will revive Bad Weather for Lithuanian premiere, an 'opera' premiered in 2017 with Arturas Bumšteinas at Krakow's Cricoteka. As an extension of intersectional studio practice, he initiates project space bologna.cc in Amsterdam.

Sophie Lee (1988) is a British artist recently graduated from De Ateliers, Amsterdam. Working broadly across sculpture and moving image Lee brings diverse historical phenomena together with more personal material. This comes from an ongoing interest in our relationship to history and cultural production, as well as desire to map out, in the words of theorist Steven Shaviro, 'what it feels like' to be here now. Recent exhibition's took place at Whitstable Biennale (UK), Bar Babette, Berlin (DE), Yaby, Madrid (SP), De Ateliers, Amsterdam (NL), Division of Labour, London (UK). Lee is currently a participant of Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine (US).