

- **cura.** is a quarterly magazine, a publishing house, an exhibition space and a platform for editorial and curatorial activities.

Testing Time. Judith Hopf



For *Testing Time* Judith Hopf exhibits *Lily's Laptop* (2013), a newly commissioned video work for Studio Voltaire, alongside sculptures and prints. This is her first solo show in a UK gallery. Upon entering the gallery the viewer is faced with a black fabric curtain hung from a square frame; the curtain is closed off at each side, forcing gallery goers to bend and enter this low suspended booth. Displayed on a screen inside is Hopf's *Lily's Laptop* (2013), a work based on the early silent film *Le Bateau de Léontine* (1911) by Romeo Bosetti. Hopf's remake

follows the inevitable arc of destruction of Bosetti's narrative: when his child protagonist fills the sink to play with a model yacht it won't turn off, overflows and floods the entire room unbeknownst to them. In *Lily's Laptop* the protagonist plays in a flat partially decorated with Hopf's works. In this everyday, domestic setting water erupts as a vital force, finally washing away an old oil canvas down a concrete stairwell.

Along the length of the gallery space, in keeping with the steely greys and whites of its interior, is a flock of sheep. Various sized cast raw concrete blocks titter on spindly chair legs. Loose Picasso-esque drawings of sheep's faces penciled onto the blocks transform these materials into characterful beings. If sociologists have used the flock as a metaphor for passivity in human group dynamics, counting sheep to get to sleep – sheep leaping the fence to leave the flock – evokes the image of an oneiric boundary-crosser. But Hopf's sheep are also cute. And cuteness, critic Sianne Ngai has suggested, is a pastoral aesthetic that indexes our desire for *simpler* relations to commodities. (While showing at Studio Voltaire Hopf participated in the group show at Halle Für Kunst Lüneburg called 'On Cuteness'.) Underlying the cute is a sentimental attitude toward the diminutive or weak – typically the infantile, the feminine or the unthreatening. The cuteness of the sheep stands in tension with the protagonist of *Lily's*

*Laptop*who, despite fulfilling basic criteria of the cuteness, wreaks wild, untamable havoc. Hopf's flock look on indifferently at the six-part series of digital prints titled *Untitled (Captchas)*. The series presents 'captchas' – automated online tests that distinguish human users from automated spammers – as a form of concrete poetry. These near-illegible statements are the excesses of a non-communicative interaction. Hopf invites us to consider these materialisations of data as a window onto the mechanic unconscious. Like the rest of the work on display in *Testing Time* it is a meditation on the close relation between action and inaction.

by Jonathan P. Watts

Studio Voltaire, London

Judith Hopf – *Testing Time*

12 October – 14 December 2013

Albanese *monday*

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