

A MES- SAGE IN THE COL- LAR

ASHLEY PERRY . ERIN CROUCH . JEREMY EATON . JULIA MCINERNEY . KATIE RYAN . NINA GILBERT . STEPHEN PALMER . ZAINAB HIKMET

A message in the collar

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THANKS

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KINGS 2019 Committee Members:
Ashley Perry, Georgia Mill, Jeremy Eaton,
Jessica Row, Katie Ryan, Megan Kennedy,
Tara O'conal and Zainab Hikmet

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the palawa people as the traditional and ongoing custodians of lutruwita and the land on which this exhibition is taking place. We would like to pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging and to acknowledge today's Tasmanian Aboriginal community who are the custodians of this land.

We extend this acknowledgment and our respects to the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which our gallery space is situated and where this exhibition was developed.



Erin Crouch, *Under the Jumpers*, 2017
HD Digital Video

Ashley Perry
Erin Crouch
Jeremy Eaton
Julia McNerney
Katie Ryan
Nina Gilbert
Stephen Palmer
Zainab Hikmet

curated by
Jeremy Eaton
Katie Ryan

Foreward

A message in the collar brings together a selection of artists whose practices engage with notions of disclosure from a critical, literary, historical and personal perspective.

The artists employ strategies of confession, refrain, encryption and material syntax to shift the way we engage with language, images and signifiers. The artists wrangle with our contemporary means of communication, one that appears at once transparent and highly circulated as well as obfuscated and opaque.

These works are further informed by an inclination to circumvent current forms of artistic consumption and dissemination, gradually revealing meaning through prolonged engagement.

A fontanelle opens; we figure absences.
Abbra Kotlarczyk

'Code is "speaking" us [...] Code is language in debt.'^[1]

'Love sees what is invisible.'^[2]

On being invited to respond to the collective impulses of disclosure, refrain and encryption that this exhibition gathers around, there was a strong desire in me to want to say nothing at all. To have poetry make nothing happen, as W. H. Auden put it back in 1939.^[3] My sincere response to what I understand this exhibition is inclined to do—or, rather, what it is inclined not to do—was to mirror its provocations with an overarching call for silence. Not only as a (a)political or aesthetic gesture, but as something that Ian Andrews posits as a 'po-ethics'^[4]: an ethics of dissemination, akin to the 'will-less thinking' of Martin Heidegger's meditative *Gelassenheit*^[5]. But I hadn't yet arrived at this broader theorising of what I felt, then, as merely an impulse.

*'The spray
of all possible paths.*

Define possible.'^[6]

I wanted to somehow conceive, in no fixed way, a response that could withhold the 'doing' that is the *modus operandi* of language's common instrumentality: its want to procure and share possible, ideally legible, meaning.

I confess that in this want for silence, for a sympathetic refrain, I began to experience a rare feeling of anxiety in setting out to write; I was faced with a screaming absence of words and a slight panic of the body in not knowing how, then, I could start.

I recalled a recent experience of being seated in the middle of a three-way Australian conversation on a peak-hour train—the time and place where I usually recoil from bearing witness to the cognisance of publicly-displayed private conversations. In feeling a heightened, intoxicating sensation of ASMR (autonomous sensory meridian response)—surrounded as I was by a flow of gesticulating hands, freed from the auto-response of reading them—I was reminded of the gaps in our receiving and giving language as an opportunity for embodied learning.

I learn that *Gelassenheit*, in English, means serenity.

[1] Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *Breathing: Chaos and Poetry* (South Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2018), 28–32.

[2] Simone Weil, "Love in the Void Quotes," Goodreads. <https://www.goodreads.com/work/>

[3] Auden, W. H. "In Memory of W. B. Yeats," Poets.org. <https://poets.org/poem/memory-w-b-yeats> (retrieved October 28, 2019).

[4] Ian Andrews, "Poethics, epoché and contingency," *Parrhesia Journal*, 28 (2017), 118.

[5] Barbara Dalle Pezze, "Heidegger on *Gelassenheit*," *Minerva*. <http://www.minerva.mic.ul.ie/vol10/Heidegger.html> (retrieved October 28, 2019).

[6] Rae Armantrout, *Money Shot* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2011), 1.

Earlier I came across this passage placed as the opening remark to *Hatred of Capitalism*:

‘The world is starving for thoughts. If you can think of something, the language will fall into place, but the thought is what’s going to do it.’^[7]

In my case, a starvation of thought was not the issue; knowing how to metabolise a response that could impress deeply upon the necessity for omission and refrain as a form of presence, however, was.

The desire to resist Jack Smith’s sentiment was so strong that I literally proceeded to copy across and strike out his words.

‘The landscape crossed out with a pen reappears here.’^[8]

In crossing the words out I had hoped to create a kind of *sous rature* (a Heideggarian under erasure) whereby, instead of the gesture alerting to an inadequate but necessary signifier (for lack of a better term in its place), the visible cancelation of the demand becomes an important epigraph: a meditation in the form of a resistance. I had wanted to alter the prosody of the statement (which I simultaneously acknowledge can be read as deeply satirical); to reinscribe the stress as falling against the statement: ‘the world is starving for thoughts’^[9]. After all, this decree was made in light of a ‘proposal’ to change the name *Semiotext(e)* to *Hatred of Capitalism*.

What is more capitalistic than the colonisation of our minds via the proliferation of what South Korean-born German philosopher Byung-Chul Han situates in the swarm-like behaviour of our networked culture, as the ‘shitstorm’?^[10] What is more capitalistic than the conversion of our thoughts from biorhythmic to algorithmic capital itself?

‘this apothecary living in my

vein is on strike!’^[11]

The next week, one of the curators of this exhibition sent me two documents, one of which was *John Cage’s Queer Silence; Or, How to Avoid Making Matters Worse*. In it, Cage reflects on what I would call his own poethics of passive resistance, having found a pathway through Eastern philosophy at a time when he began living as a homosexual within a staunchly homophobic society: ‘I changed the very fact of saying anything: I said nothing anymore. Silence: since everything already communicates, why wish to communicate?’^[12] Through a fateful act of peer-to-peer circulation, herein lay something of my initial conundrum: how to speak to the tendency for ellipsis and refrain of meaning, by way of replicating the very means of its proliferation?

[7] Jack Smith, “Epigraph,” in *Hatred of Capitalism / A Semiotext(e) Reader*, ed. Chris Kraus & Sylvère Lotringer (Los Angeles & New York: Semiotext(e), 2001), 4.

[8] [Bei Dao from Ocean Vuong epigraph, *Night Sky with Exit Wounds*

[9] Jack Smith, *ibid.*

[10] Franco “Bifo” Berardi, *ibid.*, 26.

[11] Elena Gomez, *Body of Work* (Carlton South: Cordite Publishing Inc., 2018), 15.

[12] Jonathan D. Katz, “John Cage’s *Queer Silence; Or, How to Avoid Making Matters Worse*,” *A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 5 (1999), 241.

The surrender inherent in Cage's silences were, for his time, 'an ideal form of resistance, attuned to the requirements of the cold war consensus'^[14]. It would seem that one of the most propitious means of opposing the cacophonous, accelerationist and hyper-networked media-sphere of our contemporary world would be to assume the very materials of its dissemination—images, texts and other signifiers, often sumptuously displayed—to simultaneously conjugate a series of caesuras back into the fold.

and the sound
of distant vacuums'.^[15]

Holes and withholdings
enacted by the poethics of those works brought into the fold of this exhibition—
perfectly titled A message in the collar as if
their task of taking back to enable more to happen
were literally teetering on the threshold of

‘A compression of our thoracic nerve bundle at the collar bridge decorates the celebration of our wobble body.’^[16]

[16] Paul Abbott, "Advertisement: Strike," in F. R. David: Summer 2019, ed. Will Holder (Berlin: uh books & KW Institute for Contemporary Art, 2019), 207.

Algorithm simply means any step-by-step set of rules or instructions^[17]. Where the Greek for ‘algo’ is ‘pain’, and ‘nostos’ means ‘a homecoming’, the work of this exhibition can be felt to be breathing intervals of necessary negative space back into the finitude of our current automaton. It is an attempt to return us home to a time before such painful and rigid rhythms governed our bodies.

‘In place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art.’^[18]

Franco “Bifo” Berardi does us the favour of outlining poetry as an excess: of playing ‘the game of conjugation (the game of bodies looking to make meaning out of any syntax), not the preformatted game of connection’^[19]. *A message in the collar* is in this respect, I would say, about an excess of poethic absences. By its very conscious withdrawal, this project reappraises an excessive erotics of meaning. It asks us to respire those sensations often sidelined at the margins of our bodily awareness—those that rest, often dormant or strained, at the clavicle: the body’s only horizontal longbone. It also exposes a certain vulnerability involved in leaving one’s means of expression, of signification, somewhat open. I think here of an infant’s fontanelle as the soft spot left exposed before the cranial plates of their skull have migrated shut on their pre-linguistic state. The works in this exhibition represent, to my way of feeling, a particular openness: an attempt to return to the soft spot enabled by such a prelinguistic mode of cognition, in order to give us some of ourselves back. If such a thing were possible now.

[17] Matteo Pasquinelli. “Three Thousand Years of Algorithmic Rituals: The Emergence of AI from the Computation of Space.” e-flux. [https://](https://www.e-flux.com/jour)

www.e-flux.com/jour
[18] Susan Sontag, “Against Interpretation.” Shifter Magazine. <https://shifter-magazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Sontag-Against-Interpretation.pdf> (retrieved October 21, 2019).

[19] Franco “Bifo” Berardi, *ibid*, 32.



Stephen Palmer, *Drift 2*, 2018
inkjet print, drafting film, pencil, pin clips.

ARTISTS + WRITER

Abbra Kotlarczyk is an artist, writer, editor and sometimes curator. She maintains a research-based practice that is articulated through modes of conceptual art making and writing of criticism, poetry and prose. Her practice is hinged on visual and linguistic inquiries that often take place trans-historically through expanded notions of queerness, publication, citizenry and embodied poetics.

Ashley Perry is an interdisciplinary Goenpul artist from Quandamooka country. His recent works come from research into Quandamooka cultural practices, focusing on material culture held in museum, university and private collections. This research is used to produce works that uncover and question the discrepancies embedded in these archives. Drawn from a number of sources from firsthand accounts to historical documents, these varied and often differing accounts are interrogated, compared and are used to produce the works. The works enter a dialogue, questioning the certainty around some of these accounts and engaging in a speculative potential. He is interested in decolonising theories as a way of understanding materials, histories, and artistic practice and examining knowledge structures and methods around collections. Perry works across sculpture, drawing, printmaking and new media utilising a wide variety of materials, from traditional processes such as copperplate etching to more contemporary such as .html programming. He completed a Bachelor of Fine Art in Sculpture and Spatial Practice with honours at the Victorian College of the Arts. Perry has exhibited across Melbourne in galleries including Margaret Lawrence Gallery, West Space, Incinerator Gallery, and the McClelland Gallery & Sculpture Park. He recently presented work in Florence, Italy for the First Commissions Project, the University of Melbourne. He was the recipient of the Mary and Lou Senini Prize in sculpture (2017) and the Fiona Myer Award (2017). In 2017, Ashley was awarded an exchange to the Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Yogyakarta as a part of the New Colombo Plan scholarship.

Erin Crouch (b. 1984) is a Narm/Melbourne based visual artist who works with moving image to create video and film installations. Solo exhibitions and screenings include *Clean Up Efforts Underway*, Recess, 2019; *Then Daddy Takes His Place in an Australian Landscape*, The Treasury Theatre, Melbourne, 2018 and *Under The Jumpers*, TCB Art Inc., Melbourne, 2017. Selected group exhibitions include *False Feeling*, Constance ARI, Tasmania, 2019; *Black Box: recess*, Kings ARI, Melbourne, 2019; *THERE IS A PAIN - SO UTTER*, Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne, 2018 and *Disinterment*, MADA Gallery, Melbourne, 2017. In 2018 Erin graduated with a Master of Fine Art from Monash University, Melbourne.

Jeremy Eaton is invested in exploring lineages of social space and concepts of disclosure through a time-based art practice. Recent exhibitions/projects include: 'The Enigma Code', Sarah Scout Presents, 'Departed Acts: Lineages of Queer Practice', Centre for Contemporary Photography; 'Summer Group Show', Dominik Mersch Gallery, Sydney (2018); a group exhibition with Seven Valencia and Camille Hannah at C A V E S; and 'Of Everything That Disappears There Remains Traces' curated by Lauren Ravi at the Honeymoon Suite. He has undertaken solo projects at BUS Projects, West Space, KINGS Artist-Run and a residency at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art. In 2018 he co-curated 'In Bloom' with Madé Spencer-Castle for SPRING1883. Jeremy has written for *un Magazine*, *Art + Australia*, participated in the Gertrude Contemporary Emerging Writers Program and developed catalogue essays for numerous artists. Jeremy's work has been acquired by the Joyce Nissan Collection and is held in multiple private collections.

Julia McInerney (b.1989, Adelaide) is an artist whose work explores the dialectic of interiority and exteriority occurring between the languages of text and forms. Recent exhibitions include: The Garden, ACE Open; Archipelago, Greenaway Art Gallery; Guirguis New Art Prize 2017, Post Office Gallery Ballarat, 2016 TarraWarra Biennial: Endless Circulation, TarraWarra Museum of Art, CACSA Contemporary 2015, Greenaway Art Gallery; Eden Eden Eden, MOP Projects; and Daughters of Chaos, Deleuze Studies International Conference, Konstfack University College of Arts and Crafts. Selected solo exhibitions include: Nightlung, Constance ARI; The Animal, Bus Projects; and The Meadow, The Contemporary Art Space of South Australia Project Space. Julia has attended residencies at Youkobo Art Space, Tokyo; SIM (The Icelandic Association for Visual Arts), Reykjavik and Berlin; Fire Station Artists' Studios, Dublin; and Artspace, Sydney. In 2015 Julia was awarded the Ruth Tuck Scholarship for Visual Arts and The Adelaide Critics Circle Emerging Artist Award. Julia is currently studying a Master of Fine Arts by Research at Monash University.

Katie Ryan's practice predominantly takes the form of installation, Sculpture and video. Her work evolves from concerns pertaining to interactions and relations between objects and bodies. Ryan is fascinated by how our understanding of objects - whilst partly shaped by their physical appearance - is also constituted by their relation to our emotional and psychological associations. All of these factors converge to form categories, through which we construct an understanding of the world around us. Ryan's interest lies in the potential for works to traverse or dissolve these categorical boundaries, calling into question the validity of their parameters.

Nina Gilbert is an artist living and working in Melbourne. She studied Fine Art at the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne graduating in 2014. Selected exhibitions include, Image Reader at CCP, Melbourne (2019), Several Beautiful Angles at Kings Artist-Run, Melbourne (2018), Looking but not Seeing at Benalla Art Gallery, Melbourne (2018), Cry-baby Screening at Outer Space, Brisbane (2018), Versions at Sutton Projects, Melbourne (2017), The Image Shadow at Bus Projects, Melbourne (2016), Archiving and Fragmentation in the Digital Age at Fort Delta (2015). She is a co-organiser of 'recess' an online platform for video and moving image works with Olivia Koh and Kate Meakin, recess.net.au

Stephen Palmer artist and writer, whose practice is concerned with the uncertainties of perception and transcription. He has recently completed a PhD at the Victorian College of the Arts in Visual Art, and previously completed a Master of Arts (Critical Theory) at Monash. Recent collaborative projects include Imagining a Future Collective (with Nina Ross) at The Australian Tapestry Workshop and Postscript (with Utako Shindo) at Boxcopy, Brisbane. Recent solo exhibitions include Endless Projection at Blindside, Melbourne, and The Anxiety of the Relation, at The Margaret Lawrence Gallery, VCA. He has published texts regularly in exhibition catalogues and art magazines, and has persisted in teaching at art schools in Melbourne. He is a member of Artists' Committee, and was a co-facilitator of Light Projects ARI (Northcote) from 2010-2012.

Zainab Hikmet completed her Masters of Fine Arts at RMIT in 2015, following Undergraduate and Honours degrees from Auckland University of Technology. She has exhibited in various galleries throughout New Zealand and Australia and in 2015 was selected to complete a residency and exhibition at Singapore's Tropical Lab at LASALLE College of Arts

ABOUT KINGS Artist-Run

KINGS Artist-Run is a contemporary art gallery and studio complex located in the west end of the Melbourne CBD. The gallery was formed in 2003 by Annie Wilson, Frank Guarino, Brendan Lee , Marcel Cousins and Brie Trennery, and continues to be communally driven by a collective of artists, writers, curators and academics.

KINGS program encompasses a range of distinct experimental performances, publishing initiatives and exhibitions. These include a range of projects presented across three exhibition spaces in which artists, collectives and curators are provided with an opportunity to form new work. In addition, KINGS presents a program of singular 'one-off' events through its FLASHnight program. In 2015 KINGS developed an Emerging Writers' Program to support and mentor early career writers through the development, editing and publishing of writing in artistic contexts.

HOBIIENNALE

15 - 23

November

2019