

SHANNON EBNER
A PUBLIC CHARACTER

November – December 2015
The Shop, 62 Kingly St, London W1
Tuesday – Saturday, 11 – 6pm

Digital Video, 13 minutes (looped)
Edited by Erika Vogt
Score by Alex Waterman
Photographs by Timothy Schenck

In November and December 2015, Sadie Coles HQ presents a new film by Shannon Ebner, *A PUBLIC CHARACTER*, in the gallery's ground-floor space at 62 Kingly Street, The Shop. Compressing the artist's interests in the malleability and materiality of language, the film is a collage of black-and-white photographs, sound, and quick-fire sequences of text. It bears witness to Ebner's year-long public art project *A HUDSON YARD*. This commission for New York's outdoor High Line (a collaboration with writer and graphic designer David Reinfurt) was staged between spring 2014 and spring 2015, and comprised a series of twelve wheat-pasted posters displayed in various neighbourhoods near the High Line's elevated park. The posters drew upon Ebner's ongoing series *Black Box Collision A* (begun in 2012), for which she has photographed the letter 'A' from a myriad of found and constructed sources.



A PUBLIC CHARACTER is a newly commissioned work for ICA Miami, where Ebner's solo exhibition of the same title is on view until 17 January. It centres on text culled by Ebner following research into Hudson Yard's real estate project – a rezoning of 28 acres of the West Side of Manhattan that will result in a transformed public landscape, rewriting the public character of the neighbourhood and its citizens. Edited by Erika Vogt and scored by Alex Waterman, *A PUBLIC CHARACTER* progresses in the manner of an extended sentence – accelerating, slowing, or looping erratically yet rhythmically. Photographs of the various 'As' – magnified and implanted like adverts in urban settings – reel past at disarming speed, with Ebner periodically pausing on a view or message. Phases of silence meanwhile alternate with a soundtrack of urban noise – voices, vehicles and sporadic bits of found music create a sonic landscape that maps the topography of the city.

Interspersed with the photographs are sequences of text whose elements combine into a chain of indefinite propositions and abstract concepts: Ebner flashes up various statements prefaced by 'A', which range in character from public pronouncements to corporate slogans ("A PUBLIC SECTOR", "A PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE", "A TIME"). Elsewhere, they seem to reference her own project more closely ("A PUBLIC CONVERSATION", "A PUBLIC DISCLOSURE"). Ebner returns throughout the film to images of the Hudson Yards development project in Manhattan; and this sprawling construction site evolves into a metaphor for the transitional and unstable nature of language itself. Images of the building works are interleaved with references to verbal tenses ("PRESENT CONTINUOUS", "FUTURE CONTINUOUS", "WILL AND BE GOING TO") that enhance the film's underlying sense of endless flux and redevelopment.

Shannon Ebner (b. 1971, New Jersey) lives and works in Los Angeles. Her work encompasses photography, video, sculpture and installation. Her works frequently explore the nature of writing and its meaning, with the work acting as a form of writing, and the writing, in turn, a way of seeing. Her solo exhibition *A Public Character* is currently on view at ICA Miami. Curated by Alex Gartenfeld, the exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue with texts by Laura Hoptman, Bruce Hainley and Eileen Myles. Recent solo exhibitions include *Auto Body Collision*, Fondazione Memmo Arte Contemporanea, Rome; a year long collaborative project with David Reinfurt called 'A Hudson Yard' commissioned by Friends of the High Line, New York, NY (2015); and those at the Hammer Museum (2011), and MoMA PS1 (2007). Group exhibitions include *Storylines: Contemporary Art at the Guggenheim*, Guggenheim Museum, New York (2015); *Over you / you*, 31st Biennial of Graphic Arts Ljubljana, Ljubljana (2015); *Ecstatic Alphabets/Heaps of Language*, MoMA, New York (2012), *ILLUMInations*, 54th Venice Biennale, Venice (2011), *The Spectacular of Vernacular*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2011), 6th Berlin Biennale of contemporary Art, Berlin (2010), and the Whitney Biennial, New York (2008). In 2009, Ebner's book *The Sun as Error*, was published by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in co-operation with Dexter Sinister. Her book *Auto Body Collision* was recently published by the Carnegie Museum, with texts by Tina Kukielski, Alex Klein and Mark Owens. Her publication, *STRIKE*, is available from Mousse Publishing with texts by Barbara Casavecchia and Alessandro Giammei.

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