

OVERDUIN & CO.

PRESS RELEASE

Agnieszka Polska

"Little Planet"

February 5th – March 25th, 2017

Reception: Sunday, February 5th, 6 to 8pm

Overduin & Co. is pleased to present "Little Planet," a solo exhibition by Agnieszka Polska. The exhibition will include a selection of recent videos and photographic works. Focused on film and photographic media and their circulation under digital conditions, Polska's work is composed mainly from found digitally manipulated images combined with Polska's own scripts and poetry.

The exhibition includes a printed textile, "Glass of Petrol," hanging like a banner within the space. The image shows a champagne glass filled with iridescent bubbling petrol. The green and blue striations reflected in the glass resemble images of the Earth taken from space. The work is a conflation of two images taken from the same page of a newspaper from the 1980s; one image served as an illustration for an article on society's dependence on fossil fuels, and the other image was used as an advertisement for Champagne.

Beside the textile a monitor runs a loop of the video, "Watery Rhymes." The video examines the origins of language through an overlay of spoken and written words. Graphically rendered phrases stream across the screen and interact with images of seemingly toxic bodies of water. The words remain in constant movement, overlapping and becoming increasingly indecipherable as their forms dissolve into imagery. The text addresses the physicality of language and asserts that "language is located outside of the field of semantics, far from objective values and fixed meanings" (Ory Dessau). An audio track of repeated synthetic morse code-like percussion runs parallel to the spoken text.

Another looped video, "Leisure Time of the Firearm," depicts a digitally rendered animation of a woman's eye looking down the barrel of a gun. The figure's skin shifts from hyperreal tactility to animated representation, and the glossy pupil remains fixed in alignment with the weapon's barrel. A wave of ripples runs through the image as if reflected in fluid matter.

The slow rhythmic pace and hypnotic quality of Polska's work at times approaches the conditions eliciting ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response), which is described as "a subjective experience of low-grade euphoria characterized by a combination of positive feelings, relaxation, and a distinct static-like sensation on the skin. The effect is most commonly triggered by specific acoustic, visual and digital media stimuli." (Wikipedia)

The show is titled after the video, "Little Planet," which presents the dystopic scenario of an alternate society occupying another planet. The primary image shows an ashtray filled with smoldering cigarette butts still emitting plumes of smoke against a black field of stars in space. A text appears in a black dialogue box at the center of the frame and describes methods of tracking various increments of time. The text explains that the word "discompose" is recited to measure the length of a second, as it takes that long to pronounce the word. A minute is measured by the orbit of one cigarette butt around the planet. The central images cycle back and forth from clips of smoke wafting from the ashtray, to a clip of a judge's gavel striking its base. The gavel gives way to the image of a man adjusting his suit and glancing from his reflection in a mirror to meet the gaze of the viewer. The text goes on to describe the arbitrary nature of conventions imposed upon society. The images are accompanied by the sound of a cuckoo clock repeating continuously.

"And she said, "Let there be light," and there was light. She separated light from darkness. She gave a name to each little thing: she called "building a building; "cigarette a cigarette; "market a market. She left nothing to chance. She created man and woman. She gave them intelligence, ambition, and power. Yet, she soon had to realise that human beings are not born equal, thus she grouped them into winners and losers. She separated the good from evil, the weak from the strong, the selfish from the selfless, the world from the underworld. She gave them the Law. She taught them how to value their existence, and to keep themselves occupied with timeless, universal problems, rather than with the random trivia of the day. Then, the day came when this perfectly built system collapsed. The imminent disaster was announced by the call of the cuckoo."
(Federica Bueti)

Agnieszka Polska (b. 1985, Lublin, Poland) lives and works in Berlin. Solo exhibitions have been organized by the New Museum in New York, the National Gallery in Prague, Nottingham Contemporary in the UK, and the Salzburger Kunstverein in Austria. Polska's work has been included in exhibitions and screenings at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington DC, the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt, the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow, the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, the 19th Biennale of Sydney, the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, the 13th Istanbul Biennial, the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, and the KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin. Last year Polska's work was featured in the 11th Gwangju Biennale in Korea and at the High Line in New York. Polska's work will be included in the 57th Venice Biennale this spring.

For more information and images, please contact the gallery at office@overduinandco.com. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10am to 5pm or by appointment.