

Dorine van Meel
Disobedient Children
23 October – 12 December 2015

Thomas Cuckle
Introduction

An intimate dialogue at a wedding; the confessions of a young banker; hitchhikers at the gas station; a scene from an Antonioni film; a description of a Hillary Clinton clip on Youtube; Twitter feeds from UK's prime minister; voices resonating in space. The fragmented spoken narratives and multiple projections in Dorine van Meel's *Disobedient Children* form an abstract landscape which posits the need for a new social imagination. The work's protagonist – voiced by the artist herself – delivers an ode to the disobedient voices which may rupture commonly held ideologies and patterns of thinking.

Van Meel's practice is situated between the media of moving image, sculpture and installation. Her work with video projections expand the moving image beyond its frame; projecting onto architectural elements, suspended surfaces at angles to the space, or overlapping projected images. Van Meel's imagery is often digitally generated – such as abstract topographies of undulating lines, hovering on the verge of figuration.

In *Disobedient Children* the video channel on the larger horizontal screen breaks down into a number of scenes, each depicting a distinct digital landscape. The nature of each computer generated environment is not easy to define, although they could be characterised by certain elements within them. There are artefacts reminiscent of real world objects such as telegraph poles, fences, fabric sheets or power cables. But while some scenes appear to depict landscapes, the environments are unreal or impossible: the camera is trapped in a world of haze which modulates fantastical light combinations; fabric ribbons hang and undulate from invisible points in space; innumerable cables are suspended from one another.

Each scene is delineated by a chapter in Van Meel's voice-over, the composed soundtrack combines with the artist's words and activates the scene's visuals. An abstracted recollection of memories is weaved into the piece's text, reflecting how social

representation and power structures define our identities. Moving between a private and public sphere, the script questions how we could oppose the values and expectations imposed by the social order. But the connections between the content of *Disobedient Children's* voice-over and the 3D generated environments which it accompanies are not easy to discern.

This description could well apply to a number of Van Meel's recent works – the artist often combines a practice of writing with digitally generated imagery. The artist's words often have political overtones – reflecting feminist discourses as well as current news stories – and are often diaristic or reflective of the artists's memories and daily life experiences. In raising the question of how image, voice and soundscape relate to one another in Van Meel's practice there are many answers. One explanation may be found in the artist's aspiration to a future language of representation which is yet to be discovered.

Disobedient Children sets out to unravel the relationship between our own desires, and desires as they are formulated by others for us. Van Meel's script investigates how identities could be produced differently and how one can be political within an increasingly neoliberal society. The visual language which the artist adopts – the atmospheres which the work produces, the 3D generated landscapes, the use of digital glitches and technologically produced moire patterns – can be understood as a stand in for an unknown future, something which cannot be seen but the shape of which can already be discerned. As the camera moves through a hazy field of colours in which a physical reality is yet to crystallise, a semi-transparent sheet flows majestically across the frame as if caught in a gust of wind. Perhaps aspirations for a better future may be transient, but nonetheless they must fly.

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Thomas Cuckle is Director and Curator of Kunstraum.

15.06.15 / Naomi Pearce

Dear _,

its been a year since u and _ first slept together. happy anniversary.

_ took a train to me the day after, told me about it when i was working on the booth in basel. i remember what i was wearing: a low cut black lycra body, no bra and jeans. i rolled a cigarette and listened, phone against my ear...u had kissed on the windowsill, u had almost not gone back but he had persuaded u, he had gone down on u and ur face had got all flushed when u came and ur eyes had hurt in the early morning because of ur contact lenses.

this time of year is charged...not with the memory of ur first time, I didn't feel anything but desire when he first described to me how u had fucked. its charged because we went camping afterwards and although he brought his body to france, his head was still in berlin (or maybe new zealand)... he found it hard to tell me about this because he didnt know what it meant or how he should relate to you. we called this period of time 'emotional turmoil'.

in many ways _ and i are the closest we have ever been, but, we are also leading single lives – or at least for me, wanting singularity. sometimes a two gets so entwined individual perspective gets blurry. when we are together for long stretches i feel like i loose my sense of self.

feeling frustrated by the lack of roles available to us:

the other woman
the smug guy with two girls
the old cunt
the bit on the side
the clueless girlfriend
the lying lothario

wanting to reshape these role and relate to you both differently without resorting to these archetypes. feeling like i can do this most of the time but then frustrated by how easily the mind slips, thinks in these ways. like the muscles of a lazy athlete my thinking so quickly turns to fat. maybe that's what the anxiety or the 'not knowing' of this situation does to you, makes all ur good, free thinking turn to fat.

last week in the pub a good friend said: 'what the hell were u thinking?!'

i think she was confused for her own reasons, ones that are connected to our own sexual friendship. but, she was also worried about my lack of agency. because i didn't choose u, _ did. u didn't choose me either. he's the one with the wants and the needs and we are the ones facilitating them for him.

i should say that i never actually feel like this...i was and have always been curious about u. i have always been curious about girls and i have always wanted _ to sleep with them.

i guess the good friend's point was less about the sexual or emotional dynamics of our threeness and more about our girliness. _ and his maleness giving him access to everything at all times.

i said to him later, unlike us, he is never alone: he has the map, the information, he is the god of this universe.

the friends questioning was about our female power and ensuring that its not something that's only being used to serve. we should not be in his service.

but then, what if servitude turns u on? when we were together I had strong urges to be tender in the most caring way (out of some sense of sisterhood perhaps), our kisses were often so small and soft and we held each others hands like best friends do - but i also wanted to restrain u, to use force, to press my hand over ur mouth or squeeze ur clit between my fingers. i wanted to objectify u. it felt like u wanted that too.

i think i have known for some time that my sexuality stems from these struggles with power and control, i am driven by tendencies that i want to endure and administer simultaneously.

i wrote the above on a train back from zurich in the notes of my phone, i finish it now on the floor of an air bnb. its raining and has been raining for hours, all the shiny collectors come in damp and musty.

in response to ur question, i like plants in the sense that they have the power to heal or make u more intelligent... ive killed every one ive ever owned tho, never been green fingered.

have fun in oslo

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Naomi Pearce is a writer. She co-edits A-or-ist, a collective publication.

Disobedient Children will be accompanied by an evening of performative readings, which will take place on November 29 at 5pm. Artists and writers Maria Gorodeckaya, Dorine van Meel, Megan Nolan, Naomi Pearce and Nina Power will present their own responses to the theme of disobedience.

Music and sounds produced and performed by Jesse Osborne-Lanthier and Olle Holmberg. Voice-over by Dorine van Meel.

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