

You can tell I'm alive and well because I weep continuously.

Knockdown Center

Curated by Alison Burstein

January 13 – February 26, 2017



Anouk Kruithof, *Sweat Stress (Screenshot/Back/Moiré-Effect)* (2013). Ultrachrome print with diasec. 11.8" x 15.75"

Knockdown Center is pleased to present *You can tell I'm alive and well because I weep continuously.*, an exhibition that features David Court, Erin Diebboll, David Horvitz, Anouk Kruithof, Amanda Turner Pohan, and Steven Zultanski.

Opening Reception: January 13, 6–9pm

Poetry Reading: February 10, 7–9pm

with Alejandro Crawford, Mónica de la Torre, Shiv Kotecha, and Stacy Szymaszek,
Featuring a Sound Installation by Fernando Diaz.

You can tell I'm alive and well because I weep continuously.

Given that the average person, in a lifetime, sheds about 4,167.921 cubic inches of tears, and that I'm somewhere around 1/3 of the way through my life, then we can assume that, so far, I've shed about 1,373.034 cubic inches of tears.

Since water makes up 60% of a human body, and the volume of the average body is 5,064.97 cubic inches, then we know that the volume of water in an average human is 3,038.982 cubic inches.

And so, so far, in my lifetime, I've shed about 45.181% of my body's water in tears.

Since tears are mostly water.

Let me see here.

— Steven Zultanski, *Agony* (2012)

Taking up the processes of formal alchemy that lie at the core of the book-length poem *Agony* by Steven Zultanski, *You can tell I'm alive and well because I weep continuously* is an exhibition that traffics in transformative acts.

The show brings together the work of five artists whose techniques resonate with *Agony's* provocative alchemical idiom: these artworks quantify bodily and affective features, apply logical and scientific reasoning to absurd ends, and manipulate the linkages between language and things. By placing the objects in calculated proximity to one another—and in relation to the connective tissue of Zultanski's text—the exhibition format effects its own dynamic shift, conjuring poem-as-exhibition.

You can tell I'm alive and well because I weep continuously invites viewers to inspect examples of morphed materiality within and between the elements on view, and thereby creates opportunities to consider the potential (and celebrate the futility) of giving stable form to ephemeral traits or experiences.

In the case of works by Anouk Kruithof and Amanda Turner Pohan, staged exercises set into motion the possibility of rendering bodily sensations concrete. Kruithof's *Sweat Stress (Screenshot/Back/Moiré-Effect)* (2013) originated from an orchestrated, collective workout session, during which the artist documented the perspiration that accrued on the participants' clothing. In producing an abstracted closeup of one such garment—with its emergent optical effects—the artist reframes sweat as a source of beauty rather than a shameful signal of stress.

For *Orgasmic Exhalation Form #01* and *Orgasmic Exhalation Device for Body Spray #11* (both 2014), Pohan recorded her CO₂ emissions during orgasm and then ran this data through a series of translations: she digitally plotted the varying CO₂ levels to create a three-dimensional form (to be printed by a CNC router) and used the numbers to create an algorithm for composing a perfume (to be held in a jug and vaporized hourly). By playfully subverting the sterility of these scientific processes, Pohan probes the possibility of capturing a fleeting—or perhaps lingering—ecstasy across customized, multi-sensory forms. Complementing these objects is a vinyl wall text-poem, *Notes From the Google Doc*

(2014), which four geographically-separated lovers wrote together in real time, using the collective editing capabilities of Google Docs to enact the production of desire in both word and method.

In his work *Some Meditations for Resonating Hourglasses Sounding the Shapes of Hours* (2015/2017), David Horvitz alters the timepieces to pose the question: if we can see time passing, can we also hear it? Through a single cut that negates the device's original purpose, the vessels become glass harp instruments whose volume loosely corresponds to units of time. A score listing a set of seemingly unquantifiable moments pairs with the opened hourglasses to encourage visitors to imagine sounding them as a means of bridging what might otherwise be an irreconcilable gap between abstract notions and the material vibrations of sound-in-space.

Erin Diebboll's drawing *Thirty Years - Basement* (2010) demonstrates the act of obsessive documentation as a mode of formal conversion. On paper, the meticulously recorded items in Diebboll's parents' basement appear according to an erratically shifting perspective. Diebboll draws upon this embedded tension to propose a visual inventory as a tool for introducing order into the chaotic, fraught space of personal history and memory, even as she hints at the impossibility of such a project.

A second work by Kruithof, *Façade* (2014), subjects images to a set of optical and structural transfigurations, resulting in a multi-part photographic sculpture. Within the complex form, racks of suits, silhouetted bodies, and a decontextualized microphone are wrapped around armatures and filtered through iridescent reflections, irregular textures, and skewed sightlines. A viewer must walk around this disorienting amalgamation in order to perceive the full range of appearances and associations that arise as the discrete facets interact at shifting angles and point toward the many contingent layers that hover behind both architectural and social façades.

David Court's multi-channel video installation *Same, Same, Same* (2016) circles around the limits of transformation by sampling the readymade CGI video effects that are available through online marketplaces. In a pair of videos, the placeholder phrase "Your Text Here" receives two distinct digital treatments, and in a third, a cascade of credit cards branded "Bank of Anywhere" streams endlessly across the screen. Eschewing the option to customize these fragments (as one would when inserting them into a movie or commercial), Court instead unravels the logic of the marketplace and its algorithmically calculated products to call attention to effects as an end rather than the means.

Within the gallery, Zultanski's poem appears in two distinct formats: as a still image on a monitor and a recorded track on a headset. While the monitor recalls the poem's origin as a sequence of sentences materialized from imagination through keyboard and onto computer screen, the headset returns the text to its immaterial state, with the dictation transmitting aurally to the listener. Particular qualities and nuances of language emerge across these

unique display methods, throwing into relief the always-present mediations that separate words, objects, concepts, and minds.

About the Curator and Artists:

Alison Burstein is the Program Director at Recess. Burstein previously worked as a member of the education departments at MoMA, the Guggenheim Museum, and the Brooklyn Museum and organized a wide array of public programs, performances, experimental classes, and artist projects across these institutions. As an independent curator, she has staged exhibitions at NURTUREart (Brooklyn, NY) and the Museum of Jurassic Technology (Los Angeles, CA). Burstein is a master's student in Art History at Columbia University.

David Court is an artist and writer based in New York. Recent and upcoming exhibitions include 8eleven (Toronto), Museo de la Ciudad Querétaro (Mexico), Proxy (Providence), and Skol Center des Arts Actuels (Montreal). Court has been Artist-in-Residence at the Banff Center, in the Workspace program of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the Elizabeth Foundation for the Art's SHIFT program, and Brown University's Interrupt:3 conference. Court works with selection, formatting, and narration as modes of expression in relation to exhibition as a genre of cultural production.

Erin Diebboll was raised in Massachusetts and has been based in Brooklyn and the San Francisco Bay Area. Last summer she participated in Container Residency 01, traveling on board a container ship across the Pacific Ocean. She has been granted residencies at Headlands Center for the Arts, Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Kala Art Institute, Tsarino Bulgaria, the Vermont Studio Center, LMCC's Swing Space on Governors Island, and the Lower East Side Printshop. She received her BFA from Cooper Union.

David Horvitz has recently had solo exhibitions at Blum & Poe, Los Angeles; the New Museum, New York; Jan Mot, Brussels; Dawid Radziszewski Gallery, Warsaw; Chert, Berlin; Yvonn Lambert Bookshop, Paris; Pacific Northwest College of Art, Oregon; Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland. He has realized projects with Recess, Clocktower Gallery, post at MoMA, Printed Matter, Rhizome, and Triple Canopy. He received the Rema Hort Mann Grant in 2011 and founded Porcino gallery in Berlin in 2013.

Anouk Kruithof is a Dutch artist, working between Mexico City, New York City, and The Netherlands. She has exhibited internationally at institutions such as MoMA, New York; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Sprengel Museum, Hannover; and Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow. Her work is in the collections of Fotomuseum

Winterthur, Aperture Foundation, FOAM, and the Stedelijk Museum. Anouk Kruithof is one of the five nominees of the Volkskrant Beeldende Kunstprijs 2016. Kruithof runs the publishing platform stresspress.biz and is co-creator, director, and jury member of the Anamorphosis Prize.

Amanda Turner Pohan received her BFA from The School of Visual Arts and her MFA from Hunter College. As an extension of her art practice, Pohan is a co-founder of Temporary Agency, an artist-run nomadic platform for exhibitions and publications, as well as The Bakery Social Club, a monthly gathering for artists and designers.

Steven Zultanski is the author of four books of poetry, most recently Bribery (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2014) and Agony (BookThug, 2012).

About Knockdown Center

Featuring programming of diverse formats and media, Knockdown Center aims to create a radically cross-disciplinary environment. The particularity of our architectural environment and history leads us to gravitate toward projects that demonstrate a sensitive reactivity to site and environment. Visit our website, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

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