

Burn The Diaries, Read Them Out Loud 6.6.–19.10.2025

On annotating, editing and making text in contemporary art

Artists:

Anahita Asadifar
Sanna Helena Berger
Lara Dâmaso
Joshua Leon
Ville Laurinkoski
Prosopopoeia
Rietlanden Women's Office
Lisa Robertson
Shanzhai Lyric
Miriam Stoney
Ian Waelder
Eleanor Ivory Weber

Curator:

Gina Merz

Burn The Diaries, Read Them Out Loud is an exhibition incorporating a programme of performance, readings, discussions and exchange with a focus on text in the field of contemporary art. Conceived as a group exhibition in progress, the artworks installed are in dialogue with a series of performative interventions taking place at and around Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz over four months. Looking closely at the practice of annotating, editing and writing in art, the format considers text as the framework for or 'skeleton' of artmaking, expanding its status beyond the preliminary note. The exhibition serves as a page upon which artworks and performances are inscribed as inter-related notes – sampling, (mis)quoting and rehearsing themselves and one another.

The exhibition's title combines a quotation from artist Moyra Davey's book *Index Cards* with a reference to a hand-written annotation that the curator discovered in a copy of Kathy Acker's *Bodies of Work*. Writing processes and the usage of text as material are integral to both books: In a chapter entitled *Burn The Diaries*, Davey employs a method of fragmented narration that implies a multitude of voices in addition to her own, while Acker's essays explore the relationship between body, language and interpretation.

- 1 Ian Waelder
Exhibition display consisting of two plinths and one ceiling fan in the foyer; a 13m long plinth and a built-in wall with five window cut-outs in the exhibiton space

Galerie des Batailles, 2025

Potato chips and bread on newspaper (de Volkskrant, December 27, 2024), Artglass AR 99 Water White, acid-free board, tape on Dibond, 30 x 24 cm

Ian Waelder (b. 1993, Spain; lives and works in Frankfurt am Main and Mallorca) conceived the exhibition display in dialogue with the artists, curator and institution. It sets the stage for interaction, reference, and encounter – punctuating the space with both presence and pause. An expansive MDF wall with five windows cut within functions as a sentence running the length of the building, while a 13-meter plinth marks the void – what is left unsaid. Carried by this built structure is a work from Waelder's series on newspaper titled *Here Not Today* (2021–ongoing). In these pieces, the daily act of buying the paper becomes a quiet ritual of collecting traces. Using newspapers in languages unfamiliar to the artist, like the Dutch edition shown here, Waelder treats the page as a surface rather than a source. It becomes a backdrop for stains, crumbs, and incidental marks.

- 2 Prosopopoeia
Entertaining Ideas, 2025
Curated selection of books and printed matter

Two MDF plinths in the foyer of Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz host a selection of books curated by Prosopopoeia, a Vienna-based project space for text and language-based practices (est. 2023 by Inga Charlotte Thiele). The displayed books, temporarily including titles on loan from the Kunsthalle library, establish a connection to and between the exhibited works and artists. The display features publications that function as artworks or exhibitions in their own right. The presentation is conceived as a continually evolving extension and annotation of *Burn The Diaries, Read Them Out Loud*.

- 3 Rietlanden Women's Office with Lisa Robertson
To Lisa, 2025
Two inkjet prints on paper, each 70 x 100 cm

The exhibition takes inspiration from poet Lisa Robertson's (b. Canada; lives and works in Nouvelle Aquitaine, France) book *Anemones: A Simone Weil Project* (2021), which includes the poet's annotated translation of Simone Weil's 1941 essay *What the Occitan Inspiration Consists Of*. Robertson worked with Amsterdam-based Rietlanden Women's Office (est. 2018 by graphic designers Elisabeth Rafstedt and Johanna Ehde) on the design of the book, which is emphasising the annotations, thus making visible the normally unseen process that is part of publishing and translation. Rietlanden Women's Office conceived two posters for the exhibition based on Lisa Robertson's book *Anemones*.

- 4 Ville Laurinkoski
(Untitled) Vienne, 2025
Intermittently recurring durational sound

Ville Laurinkoski. Vienne, 2025
A5 book, edition of 20

Ville Laurinkoski (b. 1996, Finland; lives and works in Copenhagen) weaves together literature, voice and bodily expression with heightened speech, screaming and singing in his performance practice. Laurinkoski aims to create spaces that transform experiences of loneliness and intimacy into collective scenes and sceneries via performance. The artist works to expose and subvert the socio-economic, linguistic, and spatial systems that script our lives. A newly commissioned sound work and publication see the artist leave traces of voice and writing in the exhibition beyond his opening night performance.

- 5 Anahita Asadifar
...A Response, 2021
Single channel video (colour, sound), 5 min 38 sec, looped; monitor, headphones, desk, chair

Anahita Asadifar's (b. 1993, Iran; lives and works in Vienna) installation takes the form of a desk that suggests a place of research. In the video work shown on the monitor, montage becomes the artist's language. A composition of text fragments and image segments quote from Claude Cahun, Audre Lorde, Susan Sontag and bell hooks. The artist's compilation seeks to create a new conversation from borrowed voices. Asadifar fabricates a network of annotations spanning through place and time.

- 6 Joshua Leon
Glass (the memory I cannot remember) 1-5, 2025
Five hand painted glass panels, each 200 x 90 cm

Joshua Leon's (b. 1990, United Kingdom; lives and works in London) newly commissioned yellow stained glass panels use light as a form of intervention and a strategy for altering the space. This poetic gesture subtly influences the dynamics of spectatorship, tinting the view to the outside. The artist has chosen yellow to represent the stain of memory, the colour stands in for a synesthetic or repressed memory. Through the lens of his Jewish heritage, Leon reflects on glass as a wounded material. It becomes a silent witness of the past and a carrier of an unclear memory.

- 7 Shanzhai Lyric
Incomplete Poem (hedge), 2023
Wood, T-shirts

Shanzhai Lyric (est. 2015) is a New York-based collective producing a body of research that focuses on 'radical logistics and linguistics through the prism of technological aberration and unofficial cultures.' The latest iteration of their ongoing project *Incomplete Poem (hedge)* is a wooden structure draped in a collection of found slogan T-shirts that reflect on China's *Shanzhai* culture. Derived from the Chinese term meaning "mountain fortress", *Shanzhai* has come to signify counterfeit or imitative production and the subcultures that emerge around it. Shanzhai Lyric reframe the T-shirts as an evolving poetic archive.

8 Sanna Helena Berger
Schmutztitel, 2025
Serial object, 76 books for 28.7 m wall

Sanna Helena Berger's (b. 1983, Sweden; lives and works in Berlin) newly commissioned installation is comprised of international editions of Elfriede Jelinek's novel *Die Klavierspielerin* (The Piano Teacher), published in 1983. The 1988 translation of the book's title sees Jelinek's piano "player" in German become "teacher" in English. Each book cover bears the widely recognised image from Michael Haneke's 2001 french language film adaptation *La Pianiste*. Berger addresses the visual dominance of image over text and reflects on adaptation and cultural memory. She uses copies of *Die Klavierspielerin* as a serial object to explore how a single image can reshape or overwrite a literary work's reception. *Schmutztitel* (half-title) is the typographic term for the first page in a book carrying only the title, which formerly was used to protect the book block from damage before binding. Berger uses the title as a double entendre evoking Jelinek's literary heritage of working with controversial topics.

9 Miriam Stoney
Missing, 2025
Texts written and printed on A4-format paper daily over the course of the exhibition (5 June – 19 October 2025)

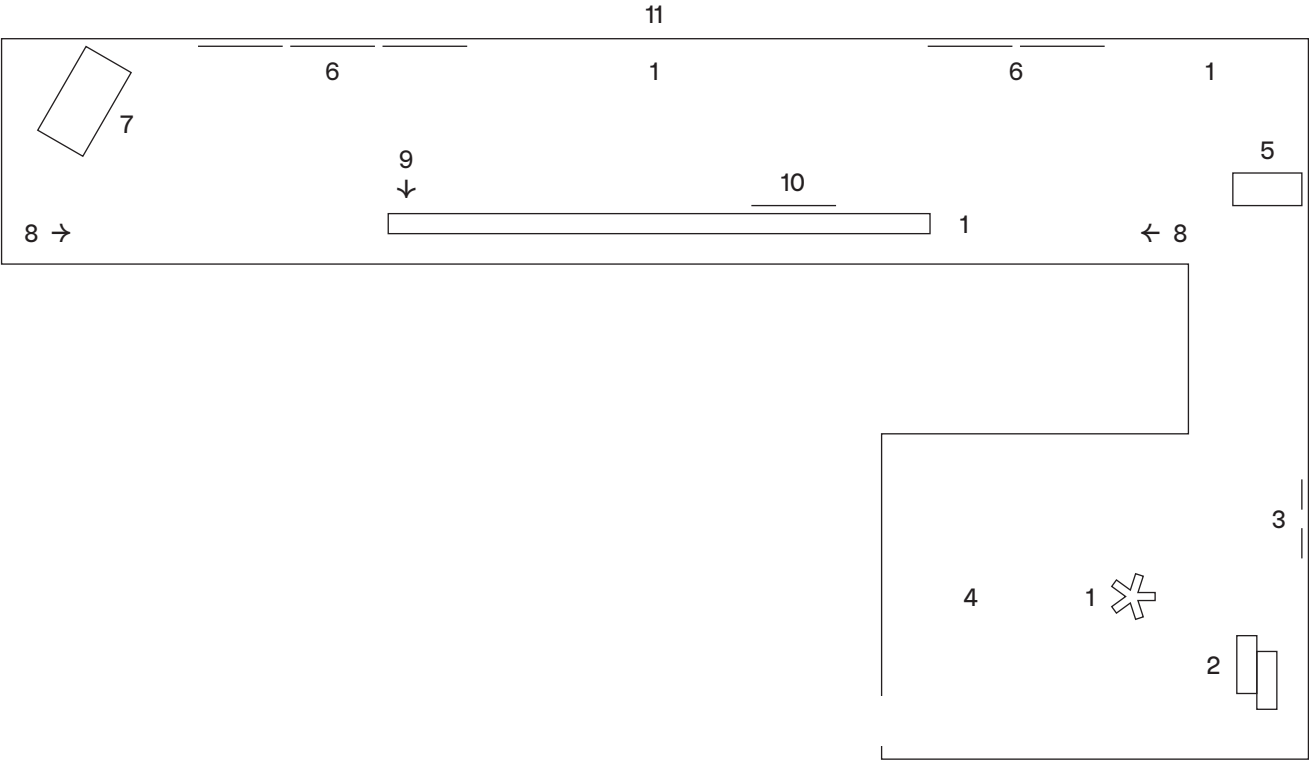
Miriam Stoney's (b. 1994, United Kingdom; lives and works in Vienna) diaristic contribution *Missing* takes the form of a fictional journal updated daily throughout the exhibition. Every day the artist sends a short text to a printer positioned in the space. Stoney's absence from Vienna for part of the exhibition influences the fatansy of the texts as the artist inserts herself back into her own life on an imagined level. A dreamlike narrative derived from Stoney's lived reality will accumulate in the printer-tray over the course of the exhibition.

10 Lara Dâmaso
exercise in facelessness (domestic), 2025
Single channel video (colour, sound), 15 min 18 sec, looped

Lara Dâmaso (b. 1996, Switzerland; lives and works in Biel and Milan) explores the paradox of disappearance through heightened presence. *Exercise in facelessness* is a new work staging a visceral confrontation with visibility and identity. The artists engages in a ritual of dissolution through embodiment. Through a process of improvised vocalisation, the artist moves from breath to sound to melody. The video investigates the tension between intimacy and spectacle, the domestic and public, and the face and persona.

11 Eleanor Ivory Weber
Smoking is good, 2023
Text on LED sign

Visible from outside, Eleanor Ivory Weber's (b. Australia; lives and works in Brussels) pointed poem of dualisms *Smoking is good* commandeers part of the LED which spans the Kunsthalle's façade. The poem plays with double meanings, syntax and repetition. Invented truisms and adages are pitted against each other. Staging the poem in public space on the outside of the building helps the artist draw wide attention to split-societies, prejudice and assumptions. The artist works frequently with LED scrollers used for advertising or transmitting text-based information. For Weber they are a means to playful and subversive messaging, where words and language are malleable materials and text is in constant motion with no clear beginning or end.



Public Programme

- 5.6. 19:00 . . . Ville Laurinkoski (Performance)
- 14.6. 16:00 . . . Lara Dâmaso (Performance)
- 3.7. 18:00 . . . Eleanor Ivory Weber and Cassandra Seltman (Performance)
- 4.9. 18:00 . . . Sanna Helena Berger (Performance)
- 14.9. 14:00 . . . Anahita Asadifar and Sam Dolbear (Workshop)
- 20.9. 14:00 . . . Prosopopoeia (Workshop hosted by Inga Charlotte Thiele)
- 25.9. 18:00 . . . Lisa Robertson (Lecture and Conversation)
- 16.10. 18:00 . . . Miriam Stoney (Reading)
- 18.10. 16:00 . . . Shanzhai Lyric (Performance)
- 19.10. 14:00 . . . Joshua Leon (Conversation and Reading)

Guided Tours

- 10.6. 17:00 . . . Curator's Tour with Gina Merz (EN)
- 14.10 17:00 . . . Curator's Tour with Gina Merz (DE)

More Information on the programme:



Kunsthalle Wien thanks

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