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New Museum Artist-in-Residence A.K. Burns Presents “Shabby but Thriving”

January 18–April 23, 2017

Residency and Exhibition Includes New Video Work and Installation, Daylong Program on Legal Rights under the New Administration

New York, NY...“A.K. Burns: Shabby but Thriving” marks **a new chapter in artist A.K. Burns’ serial work drawing on theater, science fiction, philosophy, and ecological anxieties.** Presented as part of the Department of Education and Public Engagement’s R&D Season: BODY, the project is organized around five elements: power (the sun), water, land, void, and body. **“A.K. Burns: Shabby but Thriving” is on view from January 18 to April 23, 2017,** on the Museum’s Fifth Floor, and also includes a series of public programs.

In “Shabby but Thriving,” commissioned by the New Museum, **Burns premieres a new two-channel video staged within an installation that explores the subjugation and agency of various bodies.** The video, titled *Living Room* (2017–ongoing), is the installation’s central work; it was **filmed in the New Museum’s 231 Bowery** building that houses the artist residency program. Moving from its basement through the stairwells (partially renovated and often bearing relics of previous eras) and into a series of found and constructed interiors, the video treats the entire building as both a stage and a metaphorical body. The building exists as a hermetic ecosystem and protagonist in the narrative of *Living Room*, as performers use their bodies to labor and leisure, choreograph and dialogue, bathe and subsist within this vital architectural interior. Furniture and props likewise act as both benign objects and political subjects. The video features a unique soundtrack by Geo Wyeth and a choreographed number by NIC Kay.

The Fifth Floor installation also includes sculptural objects that augment and animate *Living Room*’s narrative: a stripped and gutted couch outfitted with underglow, cast bags of dirt embedded with foil candies, a carpet soiled during the couch demolition, and fishing lures and lines stretched across walls.

Throughout the run of the exhibition, the Fifth Floor Resource Center—a hybrid exhibition, study, and pedagogical space adjacent to the main gallery—offers a variety of modes for understanding and utilizing energies of the burdened body, taking cues from reading rooms, gyms, listening stations, and spaces of respite. **A punching bag, installed in the space for visitors’ use, speaks to the ways in which bodies process shock, psychic and physical trauma, grief, and rage in the face of political extremism.** The Resource Center is organized by Burns and Alicia Ritson, Research Fellow.

As part of her exhibition and residency, **Burns has organized a series of public programs exploring the body’s relationship to the law and the environment, including “Body Politic: From Rights to Resistance” on February 5, 2017.** This daylong event will feature information sessions with lawyers, activists, and grassroots organizers, focusing on bodies under duress and rights under the new political administration. This event is free and open to the public with RSVP.

The exhibition is curated by Johanna Burton, Keith Haring Director and Curator of Education and Public Engagement, and Sara O’Keeffe, Assistant Curator.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Body Politic: From Rights to Resistance

Sunday February 5, 11:30 AM–6:30 PM

This event features information sessions with lawyers, activists, and grassroots organizers on issues of bodies under duress: civil disobedience, protest, healthcare, policing, prisons, immigration, and environmental contamination. Each session will focus on resource sharing and modes of resistance, and will include presentations followed by discussion with the audience. Participants include staff from Callen-Lorde Community Health Center, the Center for Constitutional Rights, the Center for Reproductive Rights, the New York Civil Liberties Union, the New York Environmental Law and Justice Project, and the Sylvia Rivera Law Project.

The Question of Quantum Feminism

Thursday March 9, 7 PM

This roundtable discussion brings together artists exploring the evolving and expansive topic of quantum feminism, and considers how an understanding of bodies as sensory systems can be a starting point for discussions around ethics and “entangled relations of difference.” Panelists include A.K. Burns, Harry Dodge, Carolyn Lazard, Anicka Yi, and Constantina Zavitsanos.

Listening Party: Poetry and Record Release for *Leave No Trace*

Thursday April 20, 7 PM

In celebration of A.K. Burns’ *Leave No Trace* (2016), this record release party includes performances and readings by artists and writers including Justin Allen, Fia Backström, CAConrad, Katherine Hubbard, and Juliana Huxtable. *Leave No Trace* is an experimental audio project released as a limited edition vinyl with an accompanying poem. The recording consists of two full-length LP tracks that combine ambient environmental recordings, vocalization, sounds generated from various materials, and an old electric guitar. The title references wilderness ethics, pointing to questions around unregulated spaces, bodies and actions that go unrecorded, and what is natural or naturalized.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

A.K. Burns is an interdisciplinary artist and educator residing in Brooklyn and a co-founder of W.A.G.E. (Working Artists and the Greater Economy). Her work has been exhibited widely, including in solo and two-person exhibitions at Callicoon Fine Arts, New York; Johannes Vogt Gallery, New York; Tate Modern, London; REDCAT, Los Angeles; Taxter & Spengemann, New York; Horton Gallery, Berlin; RECESS, New York; and elsewhere. She is currently a 2016–17 Radcliffe Fellow at Harvard University. *A Smeary Spot*, the opening chapter of the serial work of which “Shabby but Thriving” is the second part, premiered at Participant Inc, New York, in 2015, and traveled to the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art in 2016.

SUPPORT

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Artist residencies are made possible, in part, by Laurie Wolfert.

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ABOUT NEW MUSEUM

The New Museum is the only museum in New York City exclusively devoted to contemporary art. Founded in 1977, the New Museum is a center for exhibitions, information, and documentation about living artists from around the world. From its beginnings as a one-room office on Hudson Street to the inauguration of its first freestanding building on the Bowery designed by SANAA in 2007, the New Museum continues to be a place of experimentation and a hub of new art and new ideas.

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