

COLLECTIVE

Satellites Programme

Marie-Michelle Deschamps

Don't trip over the wire..!

26.07.14 – 07.09.14

Collective is delighted to present *Don't trip over the wire..!* a new installation and sound work by artist Marie-Michelle Deschamps, produced as part of Satellites Programme 2014.

Marie-Michelle's practice incorporates sculpture, the written word, drawing and most recently, sound. She is interested in the relationship and boundaries between language and objects and the spatial manifestation of language or speech.

Inspired by the surroundings of Collective, Marie-Michelle has created an ambitious new sound work, *Don't trip over the wire..!* that draws on the history of sound-poetry, visual scores and text based practices that disrupt the quotidian usefulness and precision of language.

Don't trip over the wire..! is the first part of a long-term research project initiated by Marie-Michelle based on the work of schizophrenic American writer Louis Wolfson, whom she has been in conversation with over the past year. Louis Wolfson has dedicated his life to developing his 'own' language to counter his deep-rooted fear of the English language. The title of the exhibition is taken from a passage in one of Wolfson's books, where he describes his translation method and his attempt to eschew any contact with his mother tongue. The title also relates to the processes by which the sound work has been made, and as an instruction not to stumble over something, it is evocative of the artist's interest in words and communication.

Marie-Michelle collaborated with musician Phillipe Lauzier and singer Erika Angell to make *Don't trip over the wire..!* She constructed a set of rules to arrange the score for the sound work that her collaborators

interpreted. This process broke down the prominence of the artist's voice in the work by inviting the collaborators to reconstruct and use their own specialisms to create a new output.

Biography

Marie-Michelle Deschamps (b. 1980) lives and works in Montreal and Glasgow, where she graduated with an MA from The Glasgow School of Art in 2012. Recent exhibitions include: *I think of you*, Battat Contemporary, Montreal (2014); *Valise* (as part of The Glasgow Weekend), BQ, Berlin (2013); *Routine Investigations*, Intermedia, CCA, Glasgow (2013); *Standard*, David Dale Gallery, Glasgow (2013); *Master Readings*, Espace Saint-Valentin, Lausanne (2013); *Don't leave me this way*, Kunstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2012).

Marie-Michelle has upcoming solo exhibitions at Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zurich in October 2014; and Battat Contemporary Montreal in May 2015. Between May-July 2014 she has been resident at Triangle, France.



In the Presence of Absence Laura Yuile

“The unknown language, of which I nonetheless grasp the respiration, the emotive aeration, in a word the pure significance, forms around me, as I move, a faint vertigo, sweeping me into its artificial emptiness, which is consummated only for me: I live in the interstice, delivered from any fulfilled meaning.”¹

For *Don't trip over the wire..!* Marie-Michelle has drawn upon the history of graphical music scores and experimented with her own methods of abstracting language and systems of notation. Graphical music scores emerged and evolved in the 1950s as a more flexible form of notation, one that allowed experimental composers to incorporate noises, effects and random elements that could not comfortably sit within the generic staves of standard musical manuscript paper. Sprawling arrangements of squiggles, patterns, clusters, loops, geometric and abstract shapes replaced the familiar musical language, making way for a different kind of structural consistency, one that functions more as a map of a musical territory than a set of clearly defined instructions.

Marie-Michelle often takes a set of rules as a starting point for her work. Her method of constructing the sound piece present in this exhibition was generated through a process of abstracting and reconfiguring such rules. This process prompts a shift in the relationship between artist, performers (which here may be referred to as interpreters) and finished work – a restructuring of a typically hierarchical relationship into one that accommodates an exchange of salvaging and the acceptance of loss.

Adopting a similar approach to that of a graphical score, the artist has invited the musician and performer to have freedom of

interpretation, giving up a certain amount of control over what the final output might be. With the abstraction of systems of notation prompting a move towards a more untrustworthy form of language, the interpreters must draw upon their own creative and cultural experiences in order to read and translate visual information. The communicative process turns its back on certainty and embraces an abstract dialogue generated through a complicated relationship to the notion of control.

We might refer to this act of interpretation as a performance whereby the artist sets some limitations, or guidelines, and by doing so sparks the translation of a score into its realisation in sound, gestures and perhaps words, pronounced out loud. In performing the score, the already abstracted rules are further deconstructed into a sonic architecture that will never be fully accessible to us; a rhythm that echoes with that which it lacks, and that which may still be possible.

Soundscapes and sonic architectures affect our visual perception of a space and present different ways to engage with its physicality. In mapping the musical territory and thinking about the spatial and visual dimensions of sound, we might wonder what the sound re-translated into shapes, patterns, or words written down might look like. We can try to grasp at the edges and seams of sounds and silences, in order to embody the music and translate it back into something solid. We can try to imagine what we hear as tangible material with a certain amount of fixity and determinacy – a blueprint from which various slightly differing interpretations can be derived. But what we hear performed is perhaps not fully contained within the material that produced it, nor its performative interpretation, rather it is partially held, or

masked, within the invisible residue that escapes the process of abstraction.

A translation materialises as a conglomerate of two structures that includes the features assigned to the language of translation itself, which attempts to adopt logical models that are rooted in the universal workings of the human mind. In any interpretative exchange between systems of visual, verbal or non-verbal signs, we must accept both that which is lost and that which is gained, situating ourselves within this conflicted space and finding a way to contend with the loss of meaning. To interpret something is to make sense of it, to assign it significance.

Don't trip over the wire..! is an invitation to interpret or translate; a finger that traces a line around spaces and sounds as the listener steps in to replace the loss that has occurred throughout this process of abstraction, or the final step in a process of exploring the limitations and emotive possibilities of the unknown in both visual and verbal forms of language.

1 Roland Barthes, *The Empire of Signs*, (Hill & Wang), 1970.

Don't trip over the wire..! sound work
8mins 45 seconds (looped), felt and archival
pigment print.

Music composition / Korg synthesizer:
Philippe Lauzier; vibraphone: Corinne René;
voice: Erika Angell.

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Don't trip over the wire..! is part of Satellites
Programme, Collective's development
programme for emergent artists based in
Scotland. Satellites Programme includes
five solo presentations by selected Scotland
based, emergent artists and two projects
developed by interns. The programme is
specifically developed to facilitate artists at
this pivotal point in their career through peer
review, professional development, mentoring,
exhibitions and events.

Collective is a contemporary, visual arts
organisation established in 1984. Collective
delivers an exciting and ambitious programme
of exhibitions, new commissions, events and
off-site projects. Collective produces major
new work by Scotland based and international
artists who are at a pivotal stage in their
development.

Over the next two years, Collective will be
making the City Observatory complex its new
home, opening the whole site to the public
for the first time. This will bring contemporary
visual art into the iconic heart of Edinburgh.