

Liz Magic Laser, *My Mind is My Own*, May 1st – June 28th, 2015

Wilfried Lentz Rotterdam is proud to host the first exhibition in The Netherlands by artist Liz Magic Laser (b. 1981, lives and works in Brooklyn, US). The title of the show, *My Mind is My Own*, is adopted from her new video featuring an 11-year-old actress, Ella Maré, training adults for public speaking. This video is shown alongside two other works, all displayed on flat screen monitors: *The Thought Leader* (2015), and a two-channel video, *The Digital Face* (2012). The videos are accompanied by a mirrored wall piece, *Inflective Medallion*. The motif of negative public address reverberates through this work as well as throughout all three videos. The show's concept draws upon a theme central to Laser's work: how scientific management is applied to theater techniques in order to maximize the efficiency of a public figure's performance.

For *My Mind is My Own* Laser asked professional vocal coach, Kate Wilson, to teach her own daughter, Ella, to perform the role of a speech coach in a training style video. Laser worked with the mother-daughter duo to develop sinister versions of vocal exercises. Specific words and gestures are paralleled in the companion piece, *The Thought Leader*. For this video Laser appropriated the format of TED Talks (Technology, Entertainment, Design), a series of motivational speeches primarily viewed online, that aim to promote "the power of ideas to change attitudes, lives and ultimately, the world." Laser directed 10-year-old actor, Alex Ammerman, to deliver a monologue she adapted from Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground* (1864). She insinuates the Underground Man's views into the TED Talk format, applying Dostoevsky's attack on the socialist ideal of enlightened self-interest to its contemporary capitalist incarnation.

For *The Digital Face* Laser worked with two Cunningham dancers, Alan Good and Cori Kresge, to replicate the gestural movements from two State of the Union addresses: President Barack Obama's 2012 speech and President George H. W. Bush's 1990 speech. Laser discovered that Bush's was the first televised State of the Union address featuring oratorical gestures and brought his body language into contrast with Obama's more advanced technique.

The silkscreened mirrored glass work, *Inflective Medallion*, incorporates Laser's version of a diagram from a 19th Century manual on the theorist François Delsarte's method of oratorical training. Delsarte's original diagram assigns distinct meanings to an orator's arm and hand movements, giving instructions on how to perform affirmative gestures. Laser's version replaces his code of gestures with negative meanings derived from Dostoevsky's text.

Laser's recent solo exhibitions include: The Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster (DE); DiverseWorks, Houston (US); and Malmö Konsthall (SE). Recent performances were at Le Mouvement in Biel (CH), The Kitchen and Performa 11 Biennial both in New York. Her work has also been exhibited at Lisson Gallery, London (UK); the Moscow Museum of Modern Art; The Pace Gallery, NY; the Biennial of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana (SL); and MoMA PS1, NY.

The opening and publication launch, will take place on Friday, May 1st, from 4 – 7pm, and the exhibition runs until June 28, 2015. The gallery is open Friday through Sunday from 1 – 6pm and by appointment. For more information please contact the gallery: office@wilfriedlentz.com.