

ALTMAN SIEGEL

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Emily Wardill

It's not what it looks like

May 11 – June 24, 2017

Opening reception: Thursday, May 11,
6 – 8 pm

No Trace of Accelerator (2017) screening
Wednesday, May 10, 7:30 pm at The
Lab, San Francisco.

Altman Siegel is pleased to announce *It's not what it looks like*, a solo exhibition by UK-based artist Emily Wardill. For her third solo show at the gallery, Wardill will transform the space into an immersive experience addressing the artist's interest in the complex and transient relationships between images, objects and ideas. The exhibition features the U.S. premiere of the artist's film *I Gave My Love a Cherry That Had no Stone* (2016), as well as interrelated relief sculptures and text-based rayograms. Wardill's multilayered exhibition accentuates states of transition, both within the artworks themselves as well as their relationship to one another. Reconsidering the architecture of the gallery, Wardill heightens the fluid nature of the space, transmuting language into material, films into paintings and sculptures into flat walls.

Filmed in the auditorium of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, *I Gave My Love a Cherry That Had no Stone* traces a man trailed by an unidentifiable entity as he wanders throughout the interior that looks like the past imagining the future. Wardill points to Dorothea Tanning's painting *Some Roses and their Phantoms* (1952) as an influence to the film—the still life illustrates roses and a table cloth that appear to morph into unknown and otherworldly creatures; “They don't look like roses; instead they are crystalline, crumpled-up, impossible brown geometrical riddles. Something like origami or a crashed car. And everything seems normal, but these exceptional things are there, blithe and gridded by the folds in the tablecloth.” Like the painting, Wardill's film confronts the horror of our relationships towards objects, and is simultaneously ominous and comedic as things change shape, eyes bulge and the sound of water finds an echo in a glass coffee table that turns liquid. Looped on a large, tilted screen and hung from the ceiling, the artist transgresses a canonical method of display, making the viewer's experience unstable and unpredictable—while emphasizing the film's sculptural essence.

Also included in the exhibition are Wardill's rayograms, comprised of film credits from a previous film. Grounded in the artist's interest in words that try to become material, Wardill layers letters from the names of cast and crew to form arrangements of intersecting sounds and fragments—like concrete poetry. Framing the rayograms to feel as though they are in a developing bath, Wardill conflates our understanding of past and present as letters shift into images and back.

Working with white shirts, Wardill creates wall reliefs by casting the traditional article of clothing in resin. She is interested in their interdimensional quality—that all clothes become 3D when the body enters them—but also that the shirt (fresh from the package) resembles folded paper. Calling to mind origami, they are similar to the credits in that they explore the longing of one form to become another and are installed as reliefs as though they have pushed through or are floating upon the surface of the wall.

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In conjunction with her exhibition at Altman Siegel, Wardill will screen her feature film *No Trace of Accelerator* on Wednesday, May 10 at The Lab, San Francisco. The screening will begin at 7:30 pm and will be followed at 9 pm with a conversation between the artist and The Lab's Executive Director, Dena Beard. Additionally, a new publication titled *Things Keep Their Secrets* will be published in June by Bergen Kunsthall and Motto Publishing and features recent projects by the artist. Wardill is currently included in the Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement, Genève.

Emily Wardill lives and works in Lisbon, Portugal. Solo exhibitions include the Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen; Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg; La Loge, Brussels; Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen; National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen; The Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe; the Serpentine Gallery, London; FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Rheims; De Appel, Amsterdam; MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge; STANDARD, Oslo and Carlier Gebauer, Berlin. Group exhibitions include the 19th Biennale of Sydney; Tate Britain, London; Tate Modern, London; MUMOK, Vienna; The Venice Biennale; MOCA, Miami; Kunsthalle Basel; Kunstverein Stuttgart; ICA, London; OCA, Oslo and the Witte de With, Rotterdam. Wardill's work has been included in numerous publications including *Afterall*, *Art in America*, *Art Review*, *Artforum*, *Flash Art*, *Frieze*, and *The New York Times*. She works currently as a professor at Malmö Art Academy.

Image: still from *I Gave My Love a Cherry That Had no Stone* (2016).