

curated by

The Neutral
12.09. - 14.10.2023

WONNERTH DEJACO
curated by Juliette Desorgues

Artists: Anita Steckel

LUST

For this year's curated_by festival, Galerie Wonnertth Dejaco presents the first European solo exhibition to focus on the work of American feminist artist, satirist and political activist Anita Steckel as well as a series of readings by French writer Constance Debré and British artist, writer and political dominatrix Reba Maybury. Curated by writer and curator Juliette Desorgues, this interdisciplinary programme places three transgenerational figures in dialogue to reflect on questions of power, gender and desire.

A key figure of the 1950s and 60s New York downtown scene, Anita Steckel developed an oeuvre consisting of photographic, collage- and drawing-based work that blossomed during the context of the Western women's liberation movement of the 1970s. Constance Debré and Reba Maybury will perform readings of new and recent texts within the context of Steckel's exhibition for the opening weekend.

Echoing the feminist literary and artistic historical context of the city of Vienna, from Elfriede Jelinek to Valie EXPORT, each of these three voices confronts the systemic mechanisms of power with humorous, raw and biting force by placing the self as a central trope throughout their work.

Acknowledgements

With heartfelt thanks to the artists and galleries: Constance Debré, Hannah Hoffmann Gallery Los Angeles, The Estate of Anita Steckel, Reba Maybury, Ortuzar Projects New York; and to the following individuals for their invaluable support: Hugo Bausch Belbachir, Julie Boukobza, Steven Cairns, Alban Diaz, Cécile B. Evans, Paul-Alexandre Islas, Ursula Mayer, Rachel Middleman, Kenta Murakami, Kari Rittenbach and Nicholas Tammen.

Artist Biographies

Constance Debré is a French writer living in Paris. She is the author of several novels: *Playboy*, *Love Me Tender*, *Nom* and *Offenses*. *Love Me Tender* was recently published by Semiotext(e) in English. Her books have also been translated into Italian, German, Danish and Swedish.

Reba Maybury is an artist, writer and political dominatrix sometimes working under the name Mistress Rebecca. She lives and works in Jutland, Denmark and London, UK. Her work explores the tension between her perceived strength as an object of transactional fantasy and how, through the reality of sex work and gender, she attempts to turn this power into something tangible. She is the author of *Dining with Humpty Dumpty* (Wet Satin Press, 2017) and *Faster than an erection* (MACRO, 2021).

Anita Steckel (1930-2012) studied at Cooper Union and Alfred University, as well as the Art Students League of New York, where she taught from 1984 until her death. From the early 1970s, she lived at Westbeth Artists' Housing in the West Village. She was recently the subject of solo exhibitions at the Stanford Art Gallery, Stanford (2022), curated by art historians Rachel Middleman and Richard Meyer, and at Hannah Hoffman Gallery, Los Angeles (2021). Previous exhibitions include *Legal Gender: The Irreverent Art of Anita Steckel*, Jacki Headley Art Gallery, California State University, Chico and Verge Center for the Arts, Sacramento (2018); *Anita of New York*, The Suzanne Geiss Company, New York (2013); *Anita Steckel and Friends*, Westbeth Gallery, New York (2012); and *Mom Art: 1963-1965*, Mitchell Albus Gallery, New York (2008).

curated by

Her work featured in the recent institutional exhibitions Maskulinitäten, Bonner Kunstverein, Germany (2019); Cock, Paper, Scissors, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles (2016); Black Sheep Feminism: The Art of Sexual Politics, Dallas Contemporary (2016); and Identity Crisis: Authenticity, Attribution and Appropriation, The Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington, NY (2011). She was the recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant (2005), a National Endowment for the Arts grant (1983), and a MacDowell Fellowship (1966). Her work is in the permanent collections of the Brooklyn Museum, New York; Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania; Edwin A. Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita State University, Kansas; Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts; and Verbund Collection, Vienna, among others.