BAWAG Contemporary
BAWAG FOUNDATION

Franz-Josefs-Kai 3
A-1010 Vienna
T 059905 919
bawagcontemporary.at
facebook.com/
BAWAGcontemporary

Bethan Huws
Films

September 8 – November 20, 2011
Opening: Wednesday, September 7, 7 p.m.
Press preview: Wednesday, September 7, 10:30 a.m.

The artist Bethan Huws's practice is grounded in a complex process of reflection laid-out to evade all attempts at pinning it down. Language is the predominant theme. In its intense exploration of linguistic issues, Huws's oeuvre fathoms possibilities of displacement – from one space into another, from one culture into another, from one medium into another. With this approach, the artist succeeds in bringing the original idea of conceptual art up to date; she creates an open space situated between all media, genres, and disciplines without subjecting herself to conventional rules.

Bethan Huws's work comprises text pieces, drawings, installations, sculptures, performances, and films. The exhibition at BAWAG Contemporary presents the five films the artist made up to now.

Singing for the Sea from 1993 is Huws's first film. Its impressive choreography merges the voices of eight women and the rhythmic motion of the sea. In a gentle bay, the women from the Bulgarian mountain village of Bistritsa sing to the sea. They sing of shepherds, woods, and young girls while they asynchronously dance anticlockwise in a circle. Their archaic polyphonic song meets with the dancing waves, the ancient sounds from the mountains with the sea. The subtle geographic shift brings two different cultural worlds together and, at the same time, suggests an enigmatically coded communication which, through its poetic form of sending and receiving messages, brings American Indian smoke signals to mind.

ION ON (2003) was originally conceived as a drama for the Yorkshire Sculpture Park to be performed in the open under a big Lebanon cedar. The film is set in a deserted Sardinian landscape of ruins and the surrounding fields. It fathoms the nature of art from Michelangelo to the present day by presenting an actor reciting forty-five scenes

Bethan Huws
Films

of fictitious dialogues between an artist and a curator. The self is replaced by at least two voices, each of which suggests different rhythms and tones through the actor. Rich in thoughts and allusions, the text moves across a variety of places and discourses, fictions and realities in associative shifts.

The Chocolate Bar from 2006 is a short film, whose script confronts us with three characters, three locations, and many different camera perspectives. Rhys Ifans plays himself and two other characters. The film centers on Duchamp's *Bottle Rack* hanging in the background like an alien. The script is based on a text by the artist that plays with the various meanings of *Mars* and *bar* and the resultant misunderstandings between the characters. The reflection on Marcel Duchamp, Welsh culture, and the failure of communication charges everyday things with a lot of humor and art-theoretical irony.

Fountain (2009) is a visually powerful attempt to present the subject (fountain, source, origin of life, symbol of love, married life, etc.) in its many meanings and within the context of the allegories and myths with which it is interwoven. It combines speaking about Duchamp's ready-made from 1917 and the waterfall in *Étant donnés* with the sound of rushing water and spectacular pictures of forty-nine Roman fountains. While seeing these many Baroque fountains, we hear the artist's voice reciting nine figures of speech which she thinks to have come upon in *Étant donnés.* Each single fountain describes a new concept and warrants new meaning. Again and again, the flux from one meaning to the next seems to hold the promise of meaningfulness – a promise that is, however, not fulfilled. Metaphorically, *Fountain* investigates how the sound of rushing water resembles the process of thinking and speaking and the passage of time.

A Marriage in the King´s Forest from 2009 documents a young couple's wedding reception and transfers it into the fairytale King's Wood near Challock in Kent in a subtle geographical shift. The original venue of the social ritual – with its souvenir snapshots and the entry of the newlyweds, the cutting of the first piece of the wedding cake and the dance – is an Edwardian ballroom in the Winter Gardens in Margate on

Bethan Huws
Films

the Channel coast. We move around the wedding party in slow takes. The eye of the camera is searching and roaming; it pans into different directions and zooms in on a face or some detail, before it focuses on other persons again. The record of this social choreography in picture and sound confronts inside and outside, culture and nature, time and timelessness – and, all of a sudden, turns the real event into something strange and unreal.
(Christine Kintisch)

Accompanying Program

21.9.2011, 9 p.m.
Concert
Rambo Rambo Rambo (A)

1.10.2011
Lange Nacht der Museen

12.10.2011, 9 p.m.
Concert
Pendler (A)

Free admission
For details see www.bawagcontemporary.at
Subject to alteration

BAWAG Contemporary
open daily from 2 to 8 p.m.
Accompanying events
Guided tours
each Thursday at 6 p.m.
Admission free

Curator:
Christine Kintisch
Organization:
Elisabeth Hofbauer
Technical coordination:
museum standards, mu.st. OG

Curator concerts:
Stephen Mathewson
Curator film:
Norbert Pfaffenbichler
Educational program:
Wolfgang Brunner

Social Media:
Alina Brad
Webmaster:
Christian Leberwurst
Sound engineering:
prilfish veranstaltungstechnik
Video:
Kurt van der Vloedt – artvan
Photography:
Oliver Ottenschläger
Graphic design:
Angela Althaler, a+o
Architecture:
propeller z

Press relations:
Mag. Christina Werner
w.hoch.2wei.
Kulturelles Projektmanagement
T 43/1/ 524 96 46-22
F 43/1/ 524 96 32
werner@kunstnet.at

Press Download:
bawagcontemporary.at/presse

Bethan Huws
Biography

Geboren 1961 in Bangor, Wales | Born in Bangor, Wales in 1961
Lebt und arbeitet in Berlin | Lives and works in Berlin

Ausgewählte Einzelausstellungen | Selected solo exhibitions

2011
Films & Ready-mades, FRAC Limousin, Limoges, France
Black & White Animals, Centre international d'art et du paysage, Île de Vassivière, France
Capelgwyn, Whitechapel Gallery, London

2010–11
Zeichnungen, Grafische Sammlung, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany

2010
Il est comme un saint dans sa niche: il ne bouge pas, kestnergesellschaft, Hanover, Germany
Singing for the Sea, Tate Britain, London

2009
New Works for Margate Seafront and King's Wood, Challock, Turner Contemporary, Margate and Stour Valley Arts, Challock, UK
Fountain, Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto, Portugal
Fountain, daadgalerie, Berlin

2008
Bethan Huws, University Gallery, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA
Bethan Huws, Yvon Lambert, Paris

2007
Bethan Huws, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland
Bethan Huws, Galerie Stadtpark, Krems, Austria

2006–07
B.A.C.A. Europe, Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, The Netherlands

2006
Filme, Institut für Kunst und Medien der HGK Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland
The Chocolate Bar, Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff, UK

2004

Bethan Huws
Biography

ION ON & Singing for the Sea, Tate Modern, London

2003
Foyer, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Germany
ION ON, Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff, UK
Word Vitrines, K21 – Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany

Ausgewählte Gruppenausstellungen | Selected group exhibitions

2011
Watercolours, Tate Britain, London
Back to the Future, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland
Sublimation, Oakville Galleries, Oakville, Ontario, Canada
Incongru / Incongruous – Quand l'art fait rire, Museum of Fine Art, Lausanne, Switzerland
Bob and Breakfast – Robert Filliou et ses invités, Galerie Nelson-Freeman, Paris
Spiele im Park, Villa Schöningen, Potsdam, Germany
Au loin, une île!, FRAC Aquitaine, Bordeaux, France
Kunst und Philosophie, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin

2009
Vides / Voids, Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland
The Making of Art, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
elles@centrepompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris

2008
Arte Bregaglia, Bergell, Switzerland
Piss off I'm a Fountain, The Hayward Gallery, London
The Seventh Shanghai Biennale 2008, Shanghai, China

2007
Learn to Read, Tate Modern, London
New Acquisitions – Contemporary British Art, Tate Britain, London
Marta falls silent, Marta Herford, Herford, Germany

Bethan Huws
Biography

2006
Mental Image, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland

2005–06
A Brief History of Invisible Art, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, USA

2005
Over & Over, Again & Again, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, Lithuania
Kunst in Schokolade / Art made of chocolate, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany

2004
Hauptwerke der Sammlung, Kolumba, Diözesanmuseum, Cologne, Germany
Spread in Prato 2004, Dryphoto Arte Contemporanea, Prato, Italy

2003
ION ON, Wales at the Venice Biennale, Italy