

For immediate release:

Candice Breitz at Void Gallery, Derry. Co-Curated by Orla Ryan and Maoliosa Boyle  
26.01.13 – 8.03.12

As part of the first ever UK City of Culture programme for 2013, Void Gallery are proud to present critically acclaimed artist Candice Breitz's two part video installation '*Him + Her*'. Through a multi screen installation of reconfigured and composited film scenes featuring Hollywood icons Meryl Streep and Jack Nicholson, Breitz prompts us to question how our identities are constructed through media representations, spectatorship and participation. *Him + Her* addresses the politics of gender and subjectivity articulated through the discursive terrain of globalization and media consumption.

Upon entering the gallery the viewer is presented with a choice, to visit the room of *Him* (Jack Nicholson) or of *Her* (Meryl Streep), a premier for the work to be shown in this particular way. The exhibition consists of two seven-screen installations, each with a vertical spine of three screens that has two screens positioned centrally on either side. Breitz carefully selected from twenty-three films made over forty years for Nicholson, and from twenty-eight films over thirty years for Streep. Removing the background of the film scenes, Breitz directs us to focus on the actors, and then utilises their recreated dramatized monologues to not only entertain us, but draw to us in, playing with our admiration and nostalgia, prompting a creative participatory process for the viewer which has the potential to be profoundly self reflexive. As mediated screen images are now embedded in almost every aspect of our everyday life, and, as avoiding screen time becomes more and more culturally challenging, Breitz now asks us to consider what we are experiencing and what is really happening as part of this process. *Him + Her* draws upon the questions and consequences that are revealed when screens becomes the disciplining agency from which we begin to both identify and construct ourselves.

This multi-screen installation foregrounds the creative significance of Breitz's meticulous and elaborate editing process. Here the found footage is redeployed to create a composite work, where the acephalous, viral energies of different characters performed by each actor seem to speak, simultaneously to each other and to the audience. The content and framing of the work points towards the mind of a single individual, a kind of ideal man or woman. Their frantic, pathological vocalised inner speech begins to articulate the fantasy of a single consciousness, struggling to find an coherent identity (arguably a fiction) through an internal monologue that as spectators, unnervingly exposes our own performative fantasies of self and identity construction. The tension and friction of conflicting thoughts are played out through a paradoxical framework, first through the individual and then through the politics of gender. We identify, emphasise and then somehow belong. *Him+ Her* questions what we sacrifice through our need to be part of something or be with someone.

Taking on the legacy of Warhol and drawing upon the fraught status of agency in the economic and cultural formation of globalisation, Breitz uses Hollywood Idols, media and gender as subjects to critique what globalized consumption means and has meant for subject formation. She asks the viewer to consider whether or not we have no choice but to conform or, more pertinently, how are we formed through this exposure? Breitz places a spotlight on one of the most important questions of culture today in an age of proliferating mass subjectivity, how do we or can we understand ourselves as separate from that mass? *Him + Her* questions our assumptions of choice, individuality and ultimately Art.

Candice Breitz was born in Johannesburg in 1972. She has lived and worked in Berlin since 2002. She holds degrees from the University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg), the University of Chicago and Columbia University (New York) and is a tenured Professor of Fine Art at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Braunschweig since 2007. Breitz has exhibited internationally in most major museums and kunsthallen, and participated in major biennials including Venice (2005) Kwangju Biennale, Korea and Taipei Biennale (2000), 6th Istanbul Biennial (1999) and the XXIV São Paulo Biennial (1998). Recently Breitz participated in the Sundance film festival in 2009. Breitz's work has been acquired by museums including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the Museum of Modern Art (New York). It is an honour for Void Gallery to host such a prolific artist at this point in the gallery's programme. As this is the first time Breitz's large scale moving image installations have been

shown in Ireland, *Him + Her* exhibited in the Void presents an invaluable opportunity for Northern Irish audiences to experience relevant, challenging contemporary art that addresses current debates concerning the politics of globalization and contemporary culture.

Notes for Editors:

- For any enquiries relating to images, interviews and general information regarding the exhibition and the artist, please email Emer: [Communications@derryvoid.com](mailto:Communications@derryvoid.com) (tel: 07427057275).
- Void is a non-profit organisation with core funding provided by The Arts Council of Northern Ireland with additional assistance from Derry City Council and other sources.

Images:



'Him' from *Him + Her* © Candice Breitz



'Her' from *Him + Her* © Candice Breitz