

SUZANNE LAFONT

Series

28.11.17 > 26.01.18

Opening: Tuesday 28th of November at 7:30 PM

àngels barcelona is pleased to present *Series*, the first solo show in Spain of artist Suzanne Lafont (b.1949, Nîmes) whose body of work is an extended practice of photography which incorporates references to theatre, performance, cinema, literature, art history and contemporary culture.

With her pieces Lafont attempts to find a purely visual mode of communication, using and re-using images by giving them different roles; and thus, by placing them in different contexts, she directs our attention on how the resulting images are born from a process of cultural production.

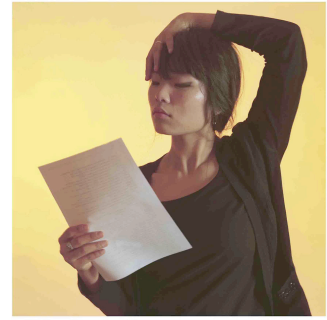
Series presents two of her key works through which we discover her interest in subjectivity, the making of meaning and appropriationism as a strategy used by conceptual art. On the one hand, *Situation Comedy* (2010), an installation with which Lafont takes as its starting point "Manipulating the Self: A Borderline Case" (1971) a work by the Canadian art collective General Idea¹. In this piece the three artists compiled 115 photographs, which were sent to them by different people, in response to the following instructions: "The hand is a mirror for the mind - wrap your arm over your head, lodging your elbow behind and grabbing your chin with your hand."

General Idea's original 1970s mail art project was published in a small B/W booklet featuring 115 "image situations", of which 99 had the initials of the person performing the action. This work wanted to emphasize the identification between object and subject, between the mirror and the hand, between the one acting and the one who's being looked at, and therefore, it remained immersed within the laws of visibility and performance. Lafont's work takes on from the named images in the publication of *Manipulating the Self* as well as the page number in which they were printed. Although here, only a few of them show the original poses re-performed by a group of art students with whom Lafont worked, and, the rest of the panels of the installation are left blank with the readable sentence "(not performed)", being filled with color gradients as if they were part of a Pantone² color panel.

Situation Comedy displaces the original B/W images of General Idea's project by highlighting the spectacular of the entertainment industry, the polished and flashy coloured surfaces of our current highly visual world, as well as the performative actions which, in this case, become somehow a playful game that displays the names of the performer- student and of the original name of the performer whom she or he enacts. In this piece every element can be altered and changed as if it were a board game where the meaning of each image will not be given by the completative state of the viewer but by its situation.

The second piece in the show, *Index* (1987-2015), is a double-projection showing 408 photographs taken by the artist between 1987 and 2015. These images act like a data bank of different objects and everyday scenes, which are associated with words in French and in English, and are arranged alphabetically in order to form a kind of dictionary. The starting point may be a word or a phrase; setting up the different order and set of associations in each language. The new and unexpected regrouping of the world, as portrayed in *Index*, breaks with the familiar patterns of thinking by using an experimental and playful redistribution of meanings, in the same way it was done by Foucault in his influential study *The Order of Things* (1966). As the artist states "By placing images in relation to words playing the role of alphabetically ordered entries, the dictionary allows the sequence to be ordered in a way that is independent of the closeness of the representative elements. The arbitrariness of the alphabet provides a way of bringing together the world in its diversity".

As the title of the exhibition recalls, *Series* not only offers an introduction to Suzanne Lafont's work, unknown in Spain until now, but also, points out some of the main references in her photography-based work: the visual world found in popular and TV culture, as well as the associative and commutative relations that one finds in mathematics; both necessary ingredients for the creation of new cultural meanings



KYONG-AH SHIN as D. PALMER-STONE

¹ General Idea was a collective of three Canadian artists, Jorge Zontal, Felix Partz and AA Bronson who were active from 1967 to 1994. As pioneers of early conceptual and media-based art, their collaboration became a model for artist-initiated activities and continues to be a prominent influence on subsequent generations of artists. General Idea's work inhabited and subverted forms of popular and media culture, including beauty pageants, boutiques, television talk shows, trade fair pavilions and mass media. Their work was often presented in unconventional media forms such as postcards, prints, posters, wallpaper, balloons, crests and pins. Self-mythology was a continuous strategy that informed their work. They created a fictional system that self-referenced and self-legitimized, claiming a space for their local art scene in Canada. Nowadays AA Bronson is the only member who is still alive of the collective.

² Pantone Inc. is a company based in Carlstadt, New Jersey (United States), creator of the Pantone Matching System, a color identification, comparison and communication system for graphic arts. Its chromatic definition system is the most recognized and used by what is usually called Pantone to the color control system. This color mode, unlike the CMYK and RGB modes, is often referred to as solid color.

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BIO

Suzanne Lafont (1949, Nîmes) Suzanne Lafont (Nîmes, 1949) lives and works in Paris. She is a major figure on the French art scene, as well as being a doctor in philosophy (whose thesis was directed by Jean-François Lyotard). Her work incorporates a singular approach to photography, with which she embraces an incessant displacement of meaning and forms and affirms the idea that an image only has meaning in relation to a given context.

She participated in 2 editions of Documenta in Kassel, Documenta IX (1992) and Documenta X (1997). She had had solo exhibitions in MOMA, New York (1992) and at the Jeu de Paume in Paris (1994), as well as the Pinacoteca del Estado, Sao Paulo (2004), the MUDAM, Luxembourg, (2011) and more recently at Carré d'Art, Nîmes, (2015). She has participated in numerous group exhibitions such as *Photography and the Human Soul, 1850-2000*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, (2000-2001), *Image Factory*, Villa Medici, Rome, Italy (2004), *Street & Studio, Urban History of Photography*, Tate Modern, London, (2010) *Elles*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, (2010-11), *Punctum*, Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg, Austria (2014).