

Midnight Sunburn

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11 – 14 July, 2019

Teddy Coste
Jānis Dzirnīeks
Jakob Forster
Josje Hattink
Lili Huston-Herterich
Honey Jones-Hughes
Merve Kılıçer
Matheline Marmy
Marco Rizzardi
Bobby Sayers

Scene 5

**Lili Huston-Herterich, Katerina Zdjelar, Liesbeth Bik,
Foot¹, Foot²**

An undressed black box stage.

Human-height steel armature with CRT television head at extreme stage right.

Stage left: A desk with a lapel mic and its cabling strewn across it, connected to an amplifier placed under an adjacent seat.

Centre stage: A microphone on a stand, hooked directly into the house PA system.

Stage right: LHH stands on an upturned steel bucket holding a megaphone.

Television flickers into life to show face of KZ.

KZ: No!

[Television turns off]

LHH: *[Through megaphone, to audience, with conviction]* No to hidden seams! To tidy endings! No to isolated thoughts disconnected from their strings of associations and provenances! No to the insistence on 'new' only being new if it is literally so: No new work, no new ideas, no new materials, no new forms! No to violent forgetting! No to free work! No to systems dependent on self-capitalisation or isolation! No to one-room studios: Whole street, neighbourhood, city, world studios only! No to rushing! No to the suppression of dreams, free associations, diversions, tangents and distractions!

[Television turns on, face of KZ]

KZ: Tilburg.

[Television turns off. LHH steps down from bucket, places megaphone on ground. Walks to desk, takes a seat behind it. Affixes lapel mic, taps with finger to test functionality. Clears throat. Elbows on desk, knits fingers together in front of her]

LHH: *[To audience, primetime manner]* Tilburg is in Brabant, the province of the Netherlands where much of the Dutch textile industry was centralised. Primarily cotton, wool and jute, the city developed around the factories that surrounded it. Generations of families worked first as house weavers and later as factory machine operators, until the industry moved to the Global South in pursuit of cheaper labour. *[Television flickers into life, face of KZ, LHH looks at it, nods, television turns off, LHH faces audience]* With the attempt to reconstruct a speculative provenance of a bag of rotted wool, I spent time reading a collection of interviews in the Tilburg TextielMuseum Library. It includes conversations with factory owners, workers, families and the community that were a part of the history of Dutch wool processing and weaving. *[Television flickers into life revealing face of KZ. LHH looks at it, nods, television turns off, LHH faces audience]* I hoped to find an imagined sheep, or herd of sheep. To think from the body of the sheep, to their shaved hair, to the fibres twisted to make a thread that was never woven. But on the way I tripped over, crouched down to inspect and got lost in industrialisation, labour, craft, globalisation, inherited craft practices and then also in the fluff of the actual stuff floating in my studio. Pulling it from my nose, where it had settled as snot and clung to my nose hairs, I realised that I had been crouching there for so long that the creases on my boots became rips in the leather and I brainstormed about how they could be mended with accent-

coloured leather string.

[Television turns on, face of KZ]

KZ: Knot.

[Television turns off. LHH removes lapel mic, walks to microphone stand, takes up position behind it. Places one hand on it, begins to sway, eyes closed, getting in sync with some silent rhythm]

LHH: *[Through microphone, sing-song, almost chanting]* I get tied up following some threads. Instead of thinking through, I follow sideways, from multiple directions at once. I spend a lot of time untangling knots in the studio. Threaded material gets moved around and every time it relocates, knots form. Some kind of memory of a change, a trace of an encounter, showing a complexity of being within a world. Unknotting these knots could be the performance of re-collecting when, or where, or how they occurred, inevitably involving speculation or mediation. It takes some time to get through certain knots.

[LHH continues swaying. Television turns on, face of KZ]

KZ: Princess Winter.

[LHH, startled out of her reverie, seems to think for a moment]

LHH: *[Still with one hand on microphone, putting her face beside and in front of it, addressing audience unamplified]* Princess Winter is a sculpture. She hates when I talk for her, so I'll let Liesbeth Bik do it so I don't get into a fight with her later.

[LHH walks to television, fumbles with controls under screen, changes channel to show face of LB]

LB: Allow me to introduce Princess Winter: The editing tool, the helper, the interlocutor, the stand-in or alter ego. Dressed in pink, bags full of groceries, caught, in heels, on her way home, perhaps, to make dinner. What place does she take? What takes place? Does the artist need her? *[Pauses]* Princess Winter functions as interrupter. She is dressed in quilted socks, underpants and small scraps that have fallen from shipping containers filled with waste textiles found at the textile port in Charlois, Rotterdam. The artist is recycling some old work from her personal background growing up in a family where art, art making and making is part of life. Authorship was often shared in that environment, and in a situation where she and her sister explored value—in a more meanings than just the economic—in collaboration. Interruption is part of collaborative processes vocalised in an artistic vocabulary.

[LHH stamps her right foot, activating a speaker in her shoe]
FOOT¹: Liesbeth Bik on Princess Winter, April 2019.

[LHH once more manipulates controls under screen, changes channel back to face of KZ]

KZ: Yes. Yes to...

[Television turns off. LHH walks back to microphone stand, removes microphone, carries it with her to bucket, sits down on bucket]

LHH: *[Intimately, through microphone]* ...what is within reach, which can be at once cosmological and microscopic, but also

isn't everything. To old work. To reclaiming as a new and important gesture. To an ongoing practice. To a life that can accommodate it. To getting paid. To not getting paid. To a growing material and formal vocabulary and a deeper trust that it can be understood. To the quiet little threatening songs... *[Stamps left foot, activating a speaker in her shoe]*

FOOT²: Gillian Welch in an interview with Rolling Stone, September 2018.

LHH: ...sung in living rooms and bedrooms. To singing it out loud to others. To the ultimate threat artists have to stop sharing what they do with their world. To this threat as a demand for life-giving remuneration: Food, true love, money, energy. To the world's flotsam and jetsam, forever replenished by capital and its castoffs.

[Television turns on, face of KZ]

KZ: Timeline.

[Television turns off. LHH sits for another moment in thought, shifting gears. Gets up, picks up bucket, picks up megaphone, carries them to desk. Places bucket upside down on desk so it covers lapel mic, places megaphone on top of bucket so the two together form a wonkily tapering cone. Takes amplifier from under chair, places it under desk, directly below just-assembled tech tower, faces amplifier's speaker upwards, places handheld microphone on top of it]

LHH: *[Softly, into megaphone, creating chain of distorted echoes and feedback as the sound passes through the various materials and amplification devices]* Many at once! Two, three, four layers with different increments scaled to align.

Time differences: My sister's morning, a late-riser, my evening. Slow time: How long it takes for glass to return to sand? Fast time: How many milliseconds of preceding sound before a corresponding image to create an illusion of synchronicity? Weird time: Past personal histories into present political histories. Time as a material for embarrassment and ecstasy. Knowing that every present is a conflation of many other simultaneous 'timelines', always becoming and shifting. You asked me about methodologies in relation to time, and I was reminded of something Jan Verwoert said this week, something about 'using your own "I"' and expanding it to a breaking point to 'EAT YOUR OWN SOCIETY'. That's how I noted it in my sketchbook: EAT YOUR OWN SOCIETY. Timelines can be layers to be unpicked, or taken and expanded, so many temporalities are true and present and going simultaneously, and that's the whole point. Which is the strongest case I've ever heard for using improper tenses, or poetry.

[Steps back and listens for a moment as the cacophony of rustling and half-formed repeating words continues to build. Television turns on, face of KZ]

KZ: Texture.

[Television turns off. LHH walks centre stage, takes off sweatshirt and hangs it on empty microphone stand, then sits on floor with head inside the hanging bell of the sweatshirt]

LHH: *[Unamplified, speaking over continuing ambient remainders of previous speech, speech slightly hampered by fabric]* Related to touch and light. These are the two ways I can think of how that texture can be perceived. This spring I've been wearing a purple velour hoodie, and every time

someone hugs me they rub their hand down my back in the direction of the fabric's grain and make a humming noise. I try to extend this kind of haptic reaction in video: Changing the light so textural surfaces find their dimensionality, layering a wrinkled sateen sheet with a pile of grassy thread and a clear glass bottle, reaching out from behind the camera to show touching. Hardness and softness is involved: A threadbare nylon hanging from a welded steel limb. Tactile language on the register of cloth, of clothing, which is a material attached to me most of the day, and probably attached to you right now too. Touch as exploration. An eye as a hand? A hand as an eye? In the darkroom, no lights are on. Fingers follow walls and feel for corners and turns. Paper is laid and compositions are prepared and then completed blind. The texture of the image and its organisation—the only way to see before the light turns on to cast its shadow.

[Keeping the sweatshirt on her head like a mask LHH stands, feeling carefully for where the microphone stand is so as not to hit her head. Carefully unhooks sweatshirt from stand without disrupting its position on her face. Placing hands on ground to guide her she slowly shuffling makes her way to EXIT stage right]

CURTAIN

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