

STAR SPANGLED

Nov. 10th - Dec. 17th, 2016

**BRAD FEUERHELM
JEROEN JONGELEEN
DOUG RICKARD
ROOPA VASUDEVAN**

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When centrists and liberals seem content with the status quo and can offer in place of an actual plan, only platitudes to relieve the citizenry's all too real fears, people turn to the irrationality of the right because the sleep of reason breeds monsters. As the bombs of scandals burst in the air and the rockets of anger from opposing political camps are in full red glare, artists play the crucial role of critical dissectors of socio-political complexities, while politics and mainstream media turn towards simplistic one-liners and the discourse of heartstrings.

Jeroen Jongeleen, *Running Shapes*

The exhibition opens with work by Jeroen Jongeleen created during a residency at the Burlington City Arts (BCA) last autumn when Bernie Sanders gained momentum across the US. Sanders is the former mayor of Burlington and one of his first acts in office was to establish the all-volunteer Mayor's Arts Council with the mission of developing an egalitarian program, which would make the arts available to all, regardless of social, economic or physical constraints. This council directly led to the establishment of the BCA.

Jongeleen's work is clearly inspired by the ideas of the Situationist International, a revolutionary group, founded in 1957, which reached its peak of influence in the general strike of May 1968 in France. Like the Situationists, Jongeleen turns against consumerism and over-regulated society by interrupting public space. Utilizing means and visual forms associated with guerilla protest, his interventions draw attention to a particular form of militant activism while questioning the nature, value and transformative potential of artistic production. The "Running Shapes" project also tips a hat to conceptual minimalists such as Sol LeWitt and Jan Dibbets.

In Vermont, Jongeleen ran alone or as the choreographer of a group in the idyllic landscape, repeating the same shapes over and over again until they were imprinted in the healthy Vermont soil. The project builds on the Jongeleen's 2014 exhibition "Traces, Shapes, Circles, Squares" and his very literal illustration of how difficult it is to give form and weight to a great idea when he ran lines from his studio to exhibitions in Brussels and later Berlin. These works were gone before Sanders bowed out of the election. Ultimately, all that remains is the memory of the runners and images of human footsteps going around and around and around. A solo exhibition of this project is forthcoming at the gallery.



Jeroen Jongeleen, *Running A Circle Clockwise*, video still, 2015



Jeroen Jongeleen, *Running a Circle Clockwise*, 2015, Installation view at Harlan Levey Projects

Brad Feuerhelm, *Good-Bye America*

Brad Feuerhelm launches his new book “Good-Bye America” at Offprint during Paris Photo 2016. Pulling images from his vast collection, for this publication he selected, smashed, scratched and inured them to reveal a wounded ideological core left to wonder if the American Dream was every anything more than slumbering optimism. The “before” shots embody freedom, liberation, and that promise that you can have it all by waving the white flag and embracing an American logic of exchange. It is a logic Feuerhelm seems to reject, and the “after” images transmit the potential tragedy of nostalgia. To launch his new publication, Feuerhelm follows the British tradition of selling Royal Cakes as collectable objects, clawing through images of the 2016 Presidential candidates to reveal the caloric and bloody layers of velvet beneath their cold faces.

This marks Feuerhelm’s second appearance in the gallery having curated «The (Oc)cult of Paraphotography» at the gallery’s former location in 2013.



Brad Feuerhelm, Image from book *Good-Bye America*, published by Yard Press, 2016



Detail of the cakes

Doug Rickard, *National Anthem*

Text by Owen Campbell (American Suburb X)

“In the preface of *National Anthem* Doug Rickard quotes Walt Whitman; in the coda he quotes Woodie Guthrie. Following the preface, an introductory text written by Annie Gårdlid, remixes the lyrics of cell-phone rap videos from YouTube. Written in white letters on a black background and arranged in stanzas over two pages, the lyrics detail guns, gold teeth, bones and haunted houses. With verbal reference, the introduction makes explicit what the images that follow can only suggest, spectral aura of blighted America. What follows Gårdlid’s verse is a combination of the street photography of Robert Frank and Gary Winogrand, who travelled the country to create a portrait of a lonely, harsh land with the rephotography and appropriation of Richard Prince. Rickard, though, travels the country without leaving his house. His earlier work, *A New American Picture*, is a collection of rephotography taken from Google Street View images of American cities like Memphis, Detroit, Fresno, New Orleans and the Bronx. Abandoned is the word typically deployed to describe these parts of America, yet the first premise of *National Anthem* is that the places shown are not, in fact, abandoned; they’re merely populated by people without agency, castaways from the middle and upper-class projects of narrative self-representation. The self-representations of the disenfranchised are scattered across mediums with low-publicity and low-barriers to entry, like YouTube, where they exist with a minimum of cross-reference and dialogue, connected by the whims of the algorithms that create the links between them. Rickard takes stills from YouTube, freezes them and rephotographs them. The result is remarkable, atmospheric street photography for the era where everything has already been photographed and selection rivals original documentation.”



Doug Rickard, *National Anthem*, video still, 2010



Doug Rickard, *National Anthem*, 2010, Installation view at Harlan Levey Projects

Roopa Vasudevan, #Bellwether

Project Statement by Roopa Vasudevan

#Bellwether is a data collection project that examines the language surrounding American electoral politics. It examines social media data, and asks whether or not we can use it in order to extract a more nuanced or accurate read on the political desires of the voting population of Ohio, a state that is regarded as vital to the endgame of both parties, but whose citizens are often treated as faceless, nameless votes. Between August 6, 2015, and July 12, 2016, using a small computer program I wrote, I attempted to collect every tweet possible that mentioned any of 22 presidential candidates from the two major American political parties by name. The collection process started with the initial debates, and ran up until just before the nomination conventions. I then filtered down the data collected to focus solely on tweets that are from or are concerned with Ohio specifically. After the tweets were filtered, I ran a variety of algorithmic language analyses on the content of the postings to determine a number of things: sentiment, frequency of similar or identical posts and phrases, grammatical structure, and the like. I most commonly used something called «regular expressions», which are text-matching patterns that look for specific words or phrases within the data. I used the results to doctor the campaign merchandise of the presidential candidates; instead of reflecting the candidates' curated messages, they will represent how they are perceived by Ohio residents. While the objects created are not meant to mirror the data in their physical form (meaning their size or design), the number and types of objects per candidate per month entirely depend on how much and what content I extract from the total tweets. The design language — color, typography, imagery and logos — mirrors that of the official campaigns as closely as possible. The objects are exhibited in a monthly timeline, displaying how perceptions of each presidential candidate shift and change over the course of primary season -- just like the content, positions, and tones presented by the campaigns themselves.

#Bellwether was commissioned by and debuted at SPACES (Cleveland, OH) in 2016.



Roopa Vasudevan, *Bellwether*, 2016, detail of the installation at Harlan Levey Projects



Roopa Vasudevan, *Bellwether*, 2016, installation view at Harlan Levey Projects



Roopa Vasudevan, *#Bellwether*, 2016, installation view at Harlan Levey Projects



Roopa Vasudevan, *#Bellwether*, 2016, detail of the installation at Harlan Levey Projects

