



Mene Mene Tekel Parsin

21 May- 9 July 2017

Preview – Saturday 20 May, 6pm-8pm



Anonymous, hobo symbols (written on the walls) without a key

Wysing Arts Centre presents the first exhibition curated by artist Jesse Darling. *Mene Mene Tekel Parsin* brings together works by international artists working across a variety of disciplines, who employ words and language to illuminate and obfuscate, fully cogent of the propagandist deployment of slogans and the seductively tall tales of advertising copy.

The artists in *Mene Mene Tekel Parsin* are **Sarah Boulton, Stanley Brouwn, Jesse Darling, Gordon Hall, Evan Ifekoya, Sulaiman Majali, Imran Perretta, Kameelah Janan Rasheed, Özgür Kar, Claire Potter, Rosa Johan Uddoh, Hannah Weiner** and **Constantina Zavitsanos**.

There will be live performances during the launch event on 20 May, by vocalist **Elaine Mitchener**, alongside exhibition artists **Claire Potter** and **Gordon Hall** who will be performing in the UK for the first time.

A screening event at Somerset House Studios on 22 June will accompany the exhibition.

Mene Mene Tekel Parsin addresses legibility – hailed by internet utopians, mass-marketeers and contemporary designers as a democratising prerogative that has come to function as a form of surveillance both at border controls and in digital capitalism. In discourses of gender and disability, legibility is the first condition [of state and systemic apparatus] for access and care, as well as forming the optics of a neoliberal visibility politics that cleaves to familiar societal categories and definitions.

Words are also powerful: symbols, incantations. The Word is itself a stand-in for divinity; the unsayable equates to the sublime. To give a name something is to claim it, and the legacies of imperial scientific fundamentalism have shown the violence of naming and categorising bodies. In this exhibition words become objects, sigils and talisman, or sculptures that stand in for the body (or the world). Works are simultaneously legible and unintelligible and often refuse to take a definitive position on meaning; what is presented as legible might hide a deeper truth in plain sight or evade straightforward signification, playing with the outside and inside of text and subtext. Whether through the encoding or occluding of words, these works remind us that obscurity, sleight of hand and even mysticism allow for moments of insight and understanding - if the viewer or reader is willing to embrace complexity and enter the realm of the unknowable.

“Wysing has been working with Jesse Darling since 2014; when they were an artist-in-residence. Since then we have continued to work with Jesse and are thrilled that they are presenting their first curated exhibition with us which will include a number of historic works alongside videos, objects, images and gestures by a range of international contemporary artists.” Donna Lynas, Director, Wysing Arts Centre

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Wysing Arts Centre is just an hour from London. On the evening of the preview a coach will travel from Cambridge station. Please enquire for details if you are a member of the media.

Wysing Arts Centre, established in 1989, develops new ways to support artists and enables art and ideas to engage a wide range of people in unexpected ways. Wysing’s large rural site near Cambridge comprises artists’ studios, a gallery and project spaces, a 17th century farmhouse and outdoor sculptures and structures. In 2017 a recording studio will be added to the site www.wysingartscentre.org

This year, Wysing are exploring **Wysing Polyphonic**, through which they will be exploring ‘many voices’ in all aspects of programming including exhibitions, events, study weeks and study days and artist residencies. Across the year Wysing will work with a range of artists to explore a diversity of contexts and positions to help better understand the role of art, artists, and arts organisations such as Wysing, at this moment of global political change.

Artists who have worked at Wysing in residencies over recent years, developing and making new work, include **Ed Atkins, Michael Dean, Cecile B Evans, Evan Ifekoya, Lawrence Lek, Gustav Metzger, Elizabeth Price, Laure Prouvost, James Richards and Cally Spooner.**

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#wysingpolyphonic