

# CAREY YOUNG

## *Legal Fictions*

August 31 – November 10, 2013

Opening: Friday, August 30, 2013, 6–8pm

Curator:  
Raphael Gygax, Migros  
Museum für Gegenwartskunst

Carey Young (b. 1970, lives and works in London) uses a variety of media to explore the relationships between the body, language, rhetoric, and systems of power. Her exhibition at the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst is her first solo show in Switzerland and the first to focus on her innovative body of work featuring law and legal language. The show will include a number of new commissions that are contextualised by various earlier works.

Young's law-based works address the monolithic power of the legal system. The artist examines law as a conceptual and abstract space in which power, rights, and authority are played out through varying forms of performance and language. With the drafting assistance of legal advisers, her works often take the form of experimental but functional legal instruments such as contracts, and also employ media such as video, installation, and text. The works in the show call law's authority into question and create slippages in the law by playfully adopting as well as disrupting its forms and methods and by highlighting its gaps, ambiguities, and subjectivities.

*Declared Void II* (2013) consists of a large-scale legal text in black vinyl with a wall drawing which delineates a corner of the gallery. The text takes the form of a contract in which American citizenship is offered to the viewer, in return for the viewer entering the performative 'platform' created by the work. Whilst clearly a fictional proposition, the piece offers a contractual agreement with the artist in which the viewer can enter and share the artist's hallucinatory proposition. Developed from an ongoing interest in legal 'black holes', in which law is used to create zones with unclear legal status and rights, the piece conflates the aesthetics of minimalism and conceptual art with ideas of migrancy and offers a potent political provocation.

*By and Between (after Bernd and Hilla Becher)* (2013) is a photographic and text piece which includes a seminal work by Bernd and Hilla Becher, *Gasbehälter Zeche Concordia, Oberhausen. D. 1969*, consisting of two photographs of an empty and full gas tank, which is part of the collection of the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst. With the consent of Hilla Becher, a photographic duplicate of this work was created. The original Becher piece and its copy hang side by side, together with a found selection of 'doublets' – legal pairs of words such as 'null and void' or 'will and testament' – familiar from English legal documents as a kind of emphatic and excessive rhetorical device. Young, however, uses them to suggest varied interpretations of her act of appropriation.

*We the People (after Pierre Cavellat)* (2013) is a large-scale photographic work, featuring a judge's robe and wig hung on a domestic garden washing line. Made in reference to a French judge and amateur artist, Pierre Cavellat, who created artistic works surreptitiously while judging courtroom trials, the image reworks a snapshot made by Cavellat at the start of his retirement. Young here considers law in relation to performance, and compares the official state role of the judge with the private and vulnerable sphere of the body, whilst the costume's position subtly suggests a moment of submission or servitude.

The *Just* series (2013) is a pair of framed prints in which text appears as a subtle white impression on paper. The phrases 'JUST' and 'AS IS' are legal terms which, to the artist, seem to balance between having 'something' and 'nothing', or between visual and experiential. *Legal Maxims* (2013) is a work consisting of a pair of legal phrases created in white neon. The phrases, 'WRONG IN ITSELF' and 'NOBODY'S THING', are legal maxims – an ancient and basic form of establishing logic or ideal within the legal field – which operate as a kind of rhetorical shorthand, intended to assist judges in deciding the outcome of cases. Contrary to the precision considered so fundamental to law, and selected by the artist for their philosophical suggestiveness, they seem inherently ambiguous and suggestive of slippages at the core of legal thinking. *Unintentional Silence* (2013) is a giveaway multiple. Visitors can take a card on which is printed a contractual text: "By taking this card, and at any time you carry it, your silence will be deemed to be unintentional silence."

In the video *Uncertain Contract* (2008) we see an actor playfully perform a script composed of legal terms from a commercial contract. The specific terms of the contract have been omitted, leading to an "uncertain" contract in which meaning is open to interpretation. *Counter Offer* (2008) is a two-part text work containing an offer and a counter offer for the viewer, each with a utopian theme centring on human rights. These offers create a legal loop in which both clauses cancel each other out in 'mid air'. Through the act of reading, the piece both erases itself and 'withdraws'.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a monograph, entitled "Subject to Contract", which presents an overview of Carey Young's works from 2003 to 2013 and includes essays by Martha Buskirk, Raphael Gygax, and Tirdad Zolghadr. The monograph is published by JRP|Ringier and Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst.

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*Obsidian Contract* (2010) features a legal contract written backwards and reflected in a black mirror, a device associated with witchcraft and the occult, as well as with the Romantic tradition in painting. The text proposes the exhibition space visible in the mirror as a new area of publicly-owned land, in which certain activities considered illegal in public space at different times, such as the grazing of animals or sexual activity, are made permissible.

*Missing Mass* (2010) is a sculptural work featuring dark matter particles and a legal disclaimer which proposes the particles as the only truly free entities in existence. *Report of the Legal Subcommittee* (2010) is a print featuring a map of the stars together with a found transcription of a United Nations meeting in which various international delegations declare frustration with their failed efforts to devise a legal definition of outer space. This admission seems to hold rich poetic and comic potential, the human attempts to bureaucratize outer space seemingly frustrated by the sublime scale and mystery of its infinite depths.

Young's law works are given further context by the presentation of two projects which engage with ideas of corporate language and control. *Product Recall* (2007) is a video featuring the artist in the midst of a session with a psychoanalyst. In a deadpan manner she is asked to remember the names of global companies associated with a series of advertising slogans centred on creativity. The *Body Techniques* series (2007) consists of large colour photographs featuring Carey Young, dressed in a suit, reworking a number of canonical performance works associated with conceptual art. Surrounding her we see a series of depopulated, vast building sites in the United Arab Emirates which are used as "stages" for the artist's actions, with the artist appearing as one tiny individual, overwhelmed, dislocated from, or even belittled by the corporate surroundings, while dressed up to play a role within it.

Here and throughout her work, Young explores how corporate and legal culture progressively pervade and reshape all domains of life. A disarming humour and a sense of the vulnerability of the body add piquancy to the apparent seriousness of her subject matter.

Carey Young has presented her work in numerous solo exhibitions since 2000, including at Le Quartier – Centre d'art contemporain de Quimper (2013), the Paula Cooper Gallery, New York (2010, 2007), the Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, and The Power Plant, Toronto (both in 2009); she participated in the Taipei Biennial in 2010, the Moscow Biennial in 2007 and 2013, the Sharjah Biennial in 2005, Performa 05 Biennial of Visual Art Performance, and the Venice Biennial in 2003. She has also recently participated in group exhibitions at Tate Liverpool (2013), the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2012), the New Museum, New York (2011), MoMA/PS1, New York (2010) and Tate Britain (2010).

The artist is grateful for the legal advice of Robert Lands, Partner, HowardKennedyFsi LLP, Dr. Jaime Stapleton, and Matthias Studer. Carey Young would also like to thank Hilla Becher. Financial support towards the development of the new commissions was provided by the Slade School of Art and the Grand Challenges Small Grants Scheme, both at University College London.

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Carey Young  
*Body Techniques (after A line in Ireland, Richard Long, 1974)*  
2007  
Lightjet Print, 121.9 x 151.8 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York



Carey Young  
*Body Techniques (after Lean In, Valie Export, 1976)*  
2007  
Lightjet Print, 121.9 x 151.8 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York



Carey Young  
*Body Techniques (after Circles, Ulrich Rückriem, 1971)*  
2007  
Lightjet Print, 121.9 x 139.1 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York



Carey Young  
*Body Techniques (after Sculpture II, Kirsten Justesen, 1969)*  
2007  
Lightjet Print, 121.9 x 139.1 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York



Carey Young  
*Body Techniques (after Hartford Wash: Washing, Tracks, Maintenance: Outside, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, 1973)*  
2007  
Lightjet Print, 121.9 x 139.1 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York



Carey Young  
*Body Techniques (after Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square [Square Dance], Bruce Nauman, 1967-68)*  
2007  
Lightjet Print, 121.9 x 142.2 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

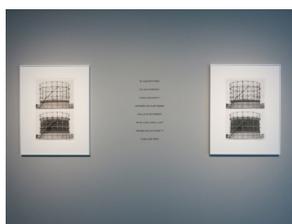
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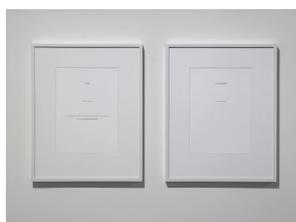


Carey Young  
*By and Between (after Bernd & Hilla Becher)*

2013  
In three parts:  
*Gasbehälter Zeche Concordia,*  
*Oberhausen. D. 1969*  
Bernd & Hilla Becher

1969  
B/w photograph  
92 x 71 cm  
2 parts, 30.5 x 39.7 cm each  
*Copy of Gasbehälter Zeche Concordia,*  
*Oberhausen. D. 1969, authorised by Hilla*  
Becher

2013  
B/w photograph, 92 x 71 cm  
2 parts, 30.5 x 39.7 cm each  
Vinyl text: 30 x 62 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper  
Gallery  
Original work: Sammlung Migros Museum  
für Gegenwartskunst



Carey Young  
*Counter Offer*  
2008  
Archival inkjet print  
2 parts: 21 x 29 cm each  
Private Collection, London



Carey Young  
*Just series*  
2013  
Blind debossed prints  
2 parts: 67 x 85.5 cm each  
Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper  
Gallery, New York



Carey Young  
*Declared Void II*  
2013  
Vinyl drawings, text  
Cube: 378 x 378 x 378 cm  
Text: 177 x 482 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper  
Gallery, New York



Carey Young  
*Report of the Legal Subcommittee*  
2010  
Giclee print, 102.97 x 82.43 cm  
Zabludowicz Collection

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Carey Young  
*Missing Mass*  
2010

5,461 dark matter particles in open-top perspex container, on plinth with silkscreened text

Box: 45.7 x 45.7 x 45.7 cm

plinth: 96.5 x 45.7 x 45.7 cm

Scientific advice by Dr. Malcolm

Fairbairn, King's College London

Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York



Carey Young  
*Product Recall*  
2007

Single channel videoprojection (color, sound), 4:27 min. (looped)

Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York



Carey Young  
*Terms and Conditions*  
2004

Single-channel video on monitor (colour, sound), 3:25 min. (looped)

Actress: Caron Darwood

Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York



Carey Young  
*Obsidian Contract*  
2010

Vinyl text, black mirror,

Mirror: 69.9 x 54.6 cm

Vinyl text: 24.8 x 19.1 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York



Carey Young  
*Unintentional Silence*  
2013

Printed cards (unlimited edition)

5.5 x 8.5 cm each

Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

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Carey Young  
*Uncertain Contract*  
2008  
Single-channel HD video projection  
(color, sound)  
14:57 min. (looped)  
Actor: Mark Oosterveen  
Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper  
Gallery, New York



Carey Young  
*Legal Maxims*  
2013  
Neon tubes, 2 parts  
1 part: 152 x 12.5 cm  
1 part: 149 x 14 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper  
Gallery, New York



Carey Young  
*We the People (after Pierre Cavellat)*  
2013  
C-print on aluminium, 190 x 124 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper  
Gallery, New York

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