

APRIL 22–  
AUGUST 16, 2015

# Julia Feyrer and Tamara Henderson: Consider the Belvedere



Production still from Julia Feyrer and Tamara Henderson's  
*Consider the Belvedere*, 2015, 16mm film, color, optical sound,  
9:28 min. Courtesy of the artists.

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Writer André Breton reflected on the underlying nature of Surrealism and its connection to the everyday in his 1932 book *The Communicating Vessels*.<sup>1</sup> For Breton, dreams act as passageways between the experience of the world and interiority, and this space between sleep and wakefulness contains transformative potential. It is also an entry point into artists Julia Feyrer and Tamara Henderson's collaborations, which move fluidly between film, sculpture, installation, performance, and book-object. *Consider the Belvedere*, the artists' latest collaboration, is the second stage of a three-part project (the first of which was presented at the Walter Phillips Gallery at The Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada, in 2013). The exhibition at ICA serves as a film set and as an installation out of which the next iteration will be partially produced. Thus, the set is both a space for future artistic production and a context for the two 16mm films at the centerpiece of the exhibition, which portray the artists' sculptural characters as they embark on mysterious journeys and undergo alchemical changes.

In *Bottles Under the Influence* (2012)—a loose reference to John Cassavetes's filmic inquiry into psychosis and sexuality, *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974)—the artists worked with glass bottles from the collection of the Historical Museum of Wines and Spirits in Stockholm, which are treated as actors to be staged, observed, projected on, used, and destroyed. Alongside the film,

1 In scientific terms, a "communicating vessel" describes two or more containers that are linked together and, as a result of gravity and pressure, will hold the same amount of liquid no matter how much is added to either container.

the artists penned a drinking song for women, which is a provisional script for future films as well as a tune that will be performed at ICA on select dates. The second film, *Consider the Belvedere* (2015)—a nod to David Foster Wallace’s meditation on the perverse pleasure taken by gourmands in the preparation of lobsters—makes its premiere at ICA and takes on a more narrative structure as it follows new bottle characters, fabricated by the artists, through a kind of detective story. These “vessels,” with names like “The Pest Detective” and “The Old Hag,” were filmed on the set of their previous exhibition at The Banff Centre and on location in Vancouver at the Belvedere apartment complex.

The gallery is divided into three sections: *The Night Times Press Bar*, where visitors are invited to peruse *The Night Times News* and record their dreams, occasionally with the help of a dream stenographer; *The Hotel Room*,

This exhibition is organized at ICA by Alex Klein, Dorothy and Stephen R. Weber (CHE’60) Program Curator. *Bottles Under the Influence* was organized for the Walter Phillips Gallery at The Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada, in 2013 by curator Jesse McKee. In turn, the exhibition at ICA will set the stage for the artists’ next collaboration.

Artists JULIA FEYRER (b. 1982, Victoria, Canada; lives Vancouver) and TAMARA HENDERSON (b. 1982, Sackville, Canada; lives Vancouver) have worked together since 2009. In addition to their exhibition at The Banff Centre, they collaborated on *Unfinished Corpse Bar* at the Jacob Lawrence Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle (2013). This is their first museum exhibition in the United States.

where we meet some of the bottles in their “offices”; and *The Beach*, where fluorescent rocks glow, awaiting their documentation and activation in the forthcoming film, *The Last Waves*. Within the installation the bottles lie dormant as sculptural props, and on film they are awakened through techniques that recall the special effects found in early cinema. While layered references to film and literature abound, the artists are equally interested in the symbolic significance of the materials they use. Ultimately, for Feyrer and Henderson, the camera both mediates and makes possible our perception of the world and understanding of time. It serves as a conduit to explore the connection between the subconscious and the everyday, becoming itself a kind of “communicating vessel.”

Alex Klein, Dorothy and Stephen R. Weber  
(CHE'60) Program Curator

FEYRER'S work has been the subject of solo exhibitions, including *Escape Scenes* at the Western Front, Vancouver (2014); *Alternatives and Opportunities* at Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver (2012); and *Irregular Time Signatures* at Johan Berggren Gallery, Malmö, Sweden (2011). She has participated in group exhibitions at museums, including the Jewish Museum, New York; Victoria Art Gallery, Canada; Presentation House Gallery, Vancouver; and Bielefelder Kunstverein, Bielefeld, Germany. She is also the co-editor of the online audiozine *Spoox* and author of a series of artist books from Perro Verlag press.

HENDERSON'S recent solo and collaborative exhibitions include *Charmer Scripture* at Rodeo, London (2014); *Tapped Out and Spiraling in Stride* at Grazer Kunstverein, Graz, Austria (2014); *Sans Tête Au Monde* with Santiago Mostyn at Kunsthall Stavanger, Norway (2014); and *Evergreen Minutes of the Phantom Figure* at Kunstverein Nürnberg, Germany (2013). She has participated in group exhibitions at venues such as the Kunstverein Toronto; Magasin III, Stockholm; and Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis. Her work was included in DOCUMENTA 13, Kassel, Germany (2012).



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RELATED PROGRAMMING

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22

5 PM

Exhibition Walkthrough (ICA Members Only) with the artists and curator Alex Klein

6 PM

Performance: *The Last Waves* with the artists and special guests (Free For All)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20

6:30 PM

*Les Bouteilles de la Table Ronde* performance in  
*Consider the Belvedere*

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10

6:30 PM

*Les Bouteilles de la Table Ronde* performance in  
*Consider the Belvedere*

Related programming has been supported by the Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Foundation.

All works in the exhibition courtesy of the artists; Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver; and Rodeo, Istanbul/London.

Support for *Julia Feyrer and Tamara Henderson: Consider the Belvedere* has been provided by Wendy Fisher, Cheri S. & Steven M. Friedman, Christina Weiss Lurie, Norma & Lawrence S. Reichlin, and by Lori W. & John R. Reinsberg.

# Institute of Contemporary University<sup>Art</sup> of Pennsylvania

ICA is always Free For All. Free admission is courtesy of Amanda and Glenn Fuhrman.

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Stills from Julia Feyrer and Tamara Henderson's *Bottles Under the Influence*, 2012, 16mm film, color with optical sound, 9:42 min.  
Courtesy of the artists; Walter Phillips Gallery, The Banff Centre; and Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver.