

firstdraft, *some words are just between us*, Text/ Sophia Cai, August 2016

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pixy liao curated
by sophia cai

some words are just between us

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Tags: biography, performance, photography, pixyliao, prismimaging, somewords, somewordsarejustbetweenus, sophiacai, thenatureofintimacy

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'Some words are just between us' is the first exhibition in Australia by Chinese-born, American-based artist Pixy Liao, who is known primarily for her intimate series of work that focus on the relationship between herself and her Japanese boyfriend (5 years her junior).

Part performance and part biography, the works in the exhibition present an introspective and personal perspective on themes of power and identity, focusing on the boundaries between public and private, as well as themes of everyday relations and individual life.

Conscious of traditional Confucian marriage values, which privilege the male, as well as the fraught ongoing international relations between China and Japan, Liao's photography series can be seen as the artist's attempt to dismantle heteronormative expectations and power structures. By positioning herself as a figure of authority, mimicking art historical subjects, performing for the camera, and subjecting the male body to a 'female gaze', Liao invites viewers to question accepted myths of romance and relationships. In her related video work and installation, Liao further challenges gendered tropes. The phallic obsession of these works is humorous as it is subversive, focusing on sexual desire and attraction as a means to disassemble patriarchal values.

While Liao's works can be understood in the context of larger socio-cultural trends and the artist's own experience as a Chinese artist living in America, its interpretation is not wholly defined by cultural context or circumstance. Rather, there are more universal themes at play here about the nature of intimacy, and more importantly what it means to live and co-exist alongside others.

biography

PIXY LIAO (artist)
Born and raised in Shanghai, China, Pixy Liao is a multi-disciplinary artist who currently resides in Brooklyn, New York. She is mostly known for her photo series 'Experimental Relationship', which depicts her personal relationship with her younger Japanese boyfriend.

Liao holds a MFA in photography from University of Memphis. She was a recipient of the NYFA Fellowship in photography, En Foco's New Works Fellowship and the LensCulture Exposure Awards. Recent artist residencies include Pioneer Works, Light Work, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Center for Photography at Woodstock, and Camera Club of New York. Her works have been exhibited internationally in group and solo exhibitions, including He Xiangning Art Museum (China), Asia Society (Houston), Flower Gallery (NY), VT Artsalon (Taiwan), Kips Gallery (Korea), The Running Horse Contemporary Art Space (Lebanon), Format (UK) and Noorderlicht (Netherlands). This is her first exhibition in Australia.

<http://www.yijunliao.com/>

SOPHIA CAI (curator)

Sophia Cai is a Melbourne-based emerging curator and arts writer with a particular interest in Asian art history as well as craft-based contemporary art practice. She graduated from the Australian National University with a First Class Honours degree in Art History and Curatorship, and completed her Masters in History of Art at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, specialising in contemporary Chinese art post-1979.

As an independent curator Sophia has worked on a number of projects and exhibitions, including 'Secret Garden' at Schoolhouse Studios, 'PLAYFUL' at City Library Gallery and 'Workey' at Tinning St. Forthcoming exhibitions include 'Domestic Bliss' at Little Woods Gallery, 'Think Pink' at ENOUGH Space, and a series of pop-up exhibitions at the Dollhouse Gallery in Melbourne. Her arts writing has appeared in RAVEN Contemporary, Peril, Language of Labour, the Canberra Times, and more. In 2016 she was selected for the SEVENTH Emerging Writers program and also the inaugural Craft Writers Program.

<http://sophiacai.wordpress.com/>

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<http://firstdraft.org.au/exhibitions/somewords/>

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