



Whitney Claflin
 John Edmonds
 Frank Heath
 Dan Herschlein
 William Koone
 Nicolas Lamas
 Mads Lynnerup
 Ellie de Verdier
 Andrew Tosiello
 Larry Sultan & Mike Mandel

OPTION TO THE DEATH OF FREEDOM

Organized by Petra Bibeau

November 4th, 2017 - January 14, 2018

Opening: Saturday, November 4th, 6-8pm

The contemporary role of option provides an illusion to allay a sense of entrapment in our daily structure quieting a never-ending loop of collapsed feedback by promise of change reliant on option. In regards to this illusionary state (that one is free to decide upon change when presented with what is assumed as an option but is essentially a corroded strategy for sameness), is the idea that one accepts what is offered or receives more of the same resulting in no option at all. The construct of option accelerates the fallacy of a personal elect in a daily ultimatum game as it pertains to our current social climate.

The invisible arena of option is an event in and of itself requiring a provocation of its pre-programmed cultural aim to expose its true boundary. In a time where traditional protest methodology proves outmoded in ability and information networks reflect strategy over dialogue, the options provided to individuals seeking change arrive pre-coded circumventing active alterations, blind of intention - a continual Hobson's choice. Contemporary option as we know it, when assumed as a freedom-based exercise in individual power, is largely impotent as an act of defiance against the system it develops within. Yet freedom, reliant on option and the allowance it seeks in suggestion of actual self-governing, is heralded as our greatest asset. Given our options, the clock rewinds and the positions shift within the same structure.

Realizing the potential of each work individually or taken as a whole, *Option to the Death of Freedom* attempts to allow a continual inquiry beyond the half-life of contemporary option, a mediation presented as crossing many complex and current social issues. Contributing artists exhibit practices that allow for transparency and literalism

while at times allowing materialism a central charge. As an appeal against the false nature of option in the wake of considered societal, economic, and cultural freedoms, the exhibition allows expression of protest and in some cases visual confrontation towards the lack of true clarity.

Andrew Tosiello presents a revised value of authorship through an algorithmic lottery in *WHATSA NAUTHOR, THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOR, PIERRE MENARD, AUTHOR OF THE QUIXOTE* (2016). The seminal texts by Foucault (1969), Barthes (1967) and Jorge Luis Borges (1939) are reassembled in python code and presented in an algorithmic order rendering the concentrations meaningless.

Mads Lynnerup exposes realities of the economically disenfranchised and marginalised through a selection of his 2007-09 silkscreen posters, *Build More Luxury Condoms, Now Firing*, and *If You See Anything Interesting Let Someone Know Immediately*, the former being a slogan derived from the anti-terrorist posters produced for the M.T.A. during the post-9/11 climate (*If you see something, say something*), working as a preemptive approach to acts of the “un-American.”

John Edmonds ‘Hoods’ (2016-17) presents cultural identification through photographic representation, herein specifically blackness and maleness. Through his photographs Edmonds confirms the paradox of a simultaneous hypervisibility and invisibility witnessed through highly racialized visual markers, and evidenced through a continued culture of violence based on the “other”. Using elements of controlled imagery (a faceless hooded portrait), Edmonds reproduces the conditions of a visual artificial boundary as demonstrative of the racially-driven structures that attempt to equally dominate and diminish the experience of blackness through the process of racialization.

Evidence (1977) by **Larry Sultan and Mike Mandel** is considered a seminal foundation in conceptual practice based in photographic mediums that attempt to decentralize narrative and authorship. In this way Sultan and Mandel present the issue of ownership- visual or causal, to examine American corporations, institutions and agencies tasked with the technological advancement of American future, while presenting a stationless visual sequence for consideration.

Frank Heath addresses the tension between the human and the mechanical, the successes and grave failures of communication and its breakdown. In *Made to be Found* (2014), two filmmakers seek props and direction in the aisles of a department store, the words of CERN physicists overseeing the Large Hadron Collider echoing in their heads. *Made to be Found* considers the relationship between the technologies pushing us toward collapse and the apocalyptic scenarios we incessantly invent.

Whitney Clafin’s site specific installation ‘*Forget Marriage*’ is created directly on the wall through lighter burns.

Dan Herschlein’s practice revolves around the amateur and exploratory pursuit of psyche through the horror genre. Inner turmoil and the weight of expectation as it pertains to the reaction and morphing of the body ultimately confronts one’s emotional limit. This nihilistic sort of romanticism and its aftermath of physical detritus becomes symbols of the inevitable failure of transcendence, and what it means to be human.

William Koone explores how contemporary visual rhetoric is constructed by bringing into focus the physical support systems that facilitate it. Koone utilizes photographic tropes, such as commercial backdrops, to illuminate the production and fabrication of images. Utilizing a variety of media, Koone’s objects describe our contemporary culture, where the commercial image is ubiquitous. All capital generated by the sale of Koone’s work is fully

directed into *The Stipend*, a Bay Area-based grant initiative co-founded by Koone, financially assisting artists to realize exhibitions locally.

Nicolás Lamas attempts to render various historical inconsistencies generated by representation. *Damnatio memoriae* (2013) takes its approach from the modern Latin phrase literally meaning "condemnation of memory".

Ellie de Verdier, *Red Leaves* (2015)

A cold breeze shuddered the trees in the park, at a distance the town square clock struck midnight in a horror style.
A narrow path led down, through from the old pitch lined by straight walls of foliage.
Silk gloved hands deep in my starched greatcoat's pockets, each step just long enough to not force a violent crease and buckle.

Early autumn leaves covered the gravel in tones of grey, rustling softly.
Through the shrubs a flicker of light turned the top of my spine sharply cold.

By the memorial fountain the path spread out into an airy oval, rows of trees replaced by strictly hewn geometrical shapes, each just past mansized.
Creepy slow bubbles appeared on the surface of a puddle.
Patches of grass in sandy mud turned to cobblestone as I turned left into a sidestreet, high walls hid but a thin line of sky, overcast.

The strike of one, even more ghastly than the last, echoed through the alley.
As it passed, the want of a follow-up made the clacking of my shoes unbearably present.
In a doorway I could make out a shadowy shape. I waited a while watching from the curb, it was moving but wouldn't wake up and was not alive

The air carried the rancid and sweet remnants of something burning.

There was a crack in the fence to the storage center housed in the old department store.
Well inside the breeze stagnated, a thick layer of dust covered the curved walnut banisters and softened the transition between pillars and floor.
In some places the beams of the ceiling were bulging under the weight of stacked office furniture above.
Clogged up air conditioning vents vibrated and seemed to give off an inaudible sound.
I felt quite weakened and with the last drops of blood available in my fingers I inscribed a Bill for Revision of the Rule of Succession onto the walls;

Amendments to the present act of Succession, it is my Will that the Monarchy remains in most crucial aspects unaltered and in its present State, the only change I propose is that the Crown be passed on by Regicide.

Should the claimant by accident cause injury to any other persons or damage to property in the endeavour, all present Laws would be applicable.

Disclaimer; this is a work of fiction, any resemblance to persons living or dead is coincidental, sentiments expressed in the text in no way represent the views of the gallery or the artist.

Location: Casemore Kirkeby, 1275 Minnesota Street, #102, San Francisco, CA 94107

Show Title: Option to the Death of Freedom

Exhibition Dates: November 4th- January 14, 2018

Opening Reception: Saturday, November 4, 6-8pm

Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 11am - 6pm

For press inquiries, please contact Julie Casemore at (415) 851-9808 or info@casemorekirkeby.com

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