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EvaandFrancoMattes
Abuse StandardsViolations

10June–27August2016

PrivateView:Thursday9 June,7-9pm

EvaandFrancoMattes,*Dark Content, Episode 3 - His Reign Stops Here* (2015)[still] Courtesy
the artists and Carroll / Fletcher, London

Eva and Franco Mattes' exhibition *Abuse Standards Violations* investigates the dark side
of the Internet. In a new series of video installations, the New York-based duo exposes
the vast amount of unpalatable material kept away from our screens by an army of
underpaid workers, while offering a bizarre but telling glimpse into the lives of an ever-
growing, dispersed global workforce.

Dark Content(2015-ongoing), the centrepiece of the show, probes into the Internet's
most secret corners by looking closely at the largely anonymous labour force of content
moderators that has emerged with the rise of social media. Content moderators are in
essence the gatekeepers to any material accessed online. Their role is to screen all
uploads according to specific corporate standards of propriety: making sure beheadings
and gang rapes don't crop up in our Facebook news feeds, and nipples don't surprise us
onInstagram.Alongwiththemajorcorporationsthatemploythem,thesedefactopatrols of the
Internet shape our daily existence. With each 'yes' or 'no', they edit the experience
ofourcultureinthenameofmanydifferentforces:political,moral,ethical,evenreligious.   Once
the offending material has been removed, it's virtually impossible to know it was
everthere.

Content moderation is for the most part a very discreet service as the companies whohire
this workforce seek to present themselves as free and transparent tools of self-
expression. The moderators in turn often hide their work from their friends and families,
preferring not to acknowledge the kinds of things they are required to witness everyday.

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Over a period of more than a year, the Mattes interviewed a number of them about their work. These conversations developed into a series of video episodes – first released on the Darknet– with the interviewees'identities withheld through the use ofvoice software and stock avatars, a further distancing from both the person and the content itself. Each video is displayed in sculptural surrounds made from mass-produced office furniture, alluding to the home offices and identikit office cubicles around the world where thiswork often takes place. Alongside, a new series of wall-mounted insulation panels are printed with corporate moderation guidelines thatwere leaked to the artists in the course of their investigations. They serve as a reminder that this act of filtering and 'safeguarding' is always a reflection of the ideology of the organisation commissioning it.

By Everyone For No One Every Day (*BEFNOED*, 2014) also calls attention to a new form of labour in the digital age. For this series, the artists used a range of crowdsourcing websites to give instructions to anonymous workers to realise a variety of absurd performances for webcam. The artists laid out instructions for them to follow and interpret. Once received, the videos are dispersed on obscure, peripheral or forgotten social networks around the world. While for*Dark Content*the artists act as a sort of confidante,here theirposition ismore complex,astheirunusualdemandsappearto both entertainandexploittheirperformers.Inthegallery,theplacementofthemonitorsinthe space is such that, in order to watch the work, viewers are forced into a series of physically awkward and bizarre positions, in a sense taking on the role of performers themselves.

In much the same way that the performances are crowd-sourced in*BEFNOED*, the production of their series *Image Search Result* (2014-ongoing) is entirely outsourced to the Internet. For each work on display, the artists have selected a search term from their personal browsing history in their preparation for this exhibition. Adopting an idea purchased from a fellow artist, they take the first image a search engine yields for that term and have it printed on a range of objects by online custom printing services. Once produced, the objects are delivered directly to the exhibition venue, where they are unpacked, exhibited and seen by the artists for the first time.

Eva and Franco Mattes share a long-held fascination with the invisible. In *Emily's Video* (2012),theyshowadisturbingvideosourcedontheDarknetonlythroughthereactionsof its viewers. They've also programmed a computer virus (*Biennale.py*, 2001), and co-curated an inaccessible exhibition in the Fukushima exclusion zone (*Don't Follow The Wind*,2015).FortheNewYork-basedduo,what'sconcealedisoftenwhatmattersmost.

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NOTESTOTHEEDITORS

Eva and Franco Mattes(b. 1976, Italy) live and work in New York, USA. Recent solo exhibitions include *I Would Prefer Not To Include My Name*, Essex Flowers, New York,USA(2015);*BreakingBanality:TheDysfunctionofRemediation*,FeldmanGallery,Portland,
USA;*By Everyone, For No One, Everyday*, Postmasters, New York (both 2014);*Emily's Video*, Carroll / Fletcher, London, UK (2013); *Anonymous, untitled, dimensions variable*, Carroll/Fletcher,London(2012);and*LiesInc.*,SiteGallery,Sheffield(2011).Groupshows and biennials include the 20th Biennale of Sydney (as part of*Don't Follow the Wind*), Sydney, Australia; *Electronic Superhighway*and *Artists' Film International*, Whitechapel Gallery,London(all2016);*BigBang Data*,SomersetHouse,London;*2050.ABriefHistory of the Future*, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels (both 2015); Performa, New York; MoMA PS1, New York (both 2009), New Museum, New York (2005); NTT ICC Museum,Tokyo,Japan(2004);Manifesta,Frankfurt(2002);andtheVeniceBiennale(2001). In 2016, they were recipients of the Creative Capital Award.

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Carroll/Fletcher supports established and emerging artists whose work transcends traditional categorisation, using diverse media in order to explore socio-political or technological themes. From rising talents such as Constant Dullaart, Mishka Henner, and Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme, to interactive installation artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, and computer art pioneer Manfred Mohr, the gallery represents an international range of artists who use interdisciplinary research and broad means to produce work that reflects on and provides insight into contemporary culture.