

Olivia Dunbar
act like u don't know

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We all know too often, too much, too intermediately. We have learned and are trained to make sense of things in one way and not another - knowledgeable meaning makers we are indeed, yes! But sometimes ill-intelligibility is not that bad, perhaps, following Olivia Dunbar's cue, we can learn to be affected differently: *act like u don't know*.

The works Dunbar presents in her solo show at c-o-m-p-o-s-i-t-e may, at first glance, be understood as direct references to contemporary cultural and cognitive economy. As such they could be interpreted as an artistic critique of the food industries, of commodities of consumerist subjectification, or of the multi-media markets and the formal discursive and graphic novelties they come with. Such an interpretational projection, however, would stay stuck in the realm of 'what it is', 'what it refers to', 'what it represents' instead of following the less blatant proposition of 'what it does', 'how it affects', 'what it performs'.

affecting	performing	multiverse
knowing	representing	universe

paradisiacal landscapes, stale bread, cathodes, cigarette butts, cornflakes, macbooks, fabrics, exercise mats, peanut butter, candles, potato chips, ashes, socks, paint, mold, sun flower seeds, soap, flower petals

Either particle, wave, material, or object, Dunbar re/composes a collection of disparate elements in configurations of contagious nextness, in which conjunctive and disjunctive relations between them are not so much about the referential surfaces they bear, that is the meanings projected upon them, but rather about their capacity to affect and be affected (or not) by the others; thus moving along on a tightrope from semiotic transformation to arrant asignification, that is from an astute displacement of received meanings to discursively unmediated experiential effects.

Brushing against present-day recognizable aesthetics, while using the pitfalls they come with in order to avoid them, Dunbar presents us with new trails to follow, an unfamiliar hodology, by redistributing habitual geographies of matter and meaning, of representing and performing, of virtual and tangible space.

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Olivia Dunbar (b. 1988 Canada) received an MFA from the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, and is currently based in Amsterdam where she is a resident at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten. Dunbar works towards a vernacular understanding of composition - how things can be made, unmade and excavated in order to be disidentified. Working across diverse media, her studio practice is context based and makes use of formal strategies such as replacement to navigate the ever changing parameters of what exists. Poems intersect with sculptural works and generate multiple meanings within Dunbar's layered installations, allowing viewers to experience the work more than once at the same time. Recent presentations include Other atmospheric phenomena at Rongwrong in Amsterdam and That tilting u at Model Projects, Vancouver. Dunbar's poetry will be part of an upcoming exhibition in June at SALTS, Basel.