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JOHANNA BILLING | KEEPING TIME

curated by Ilaria Bonacossa

April 11th, 2016 – June 12th, 2016

Press preview April 11th: 10^{am}– 1^{pm}

Opening April 11th: 18.30 – 21.30

Villa Croce presents **Keeping Time**, Johanna Billing's first solo exhibition in an Italian museum. Johanna Billing is internationally recognized for her talent in weaving music, movement and rhythm in videos that oscillate between documentary and fiction, as multi-layered interpretations of specific locations and their social and political history. Her mesmerizing looped video installations present people, often youngsters, absorbed in simple choreographed activities. Her characters freely interpret them-selves on the background of daily life creating film-performances suspended between reality and fiction that question the artist's role of authorship. Merging the production modes of live events and workshops with a strictly film-like language, Johanna Billing in parts directs the participants and in part activates a series of improvisations allowing the plot to develop chorally. Working around the notion of performance and the possibility it holds to reveal issues of the public and the private as well as the individual in the society as a whole, Billing often addresses political climates and cultural specificities, but more importantly transforms, through a documentary method, her filmmaking in a fictive space that examines actual and contrived events illuminating their overlap.

Keeping Time, conceived in response to Villa Croce's historical architecture, spans the past fifteen years of Billing's career through four significant productions, (filmed in Oslo, Norway, Pulheim in Germany, Rome, and Iasi in Romania), articulating the development of a personal narrative that merges the worlds of cinema, music and performance. Her films are a product of an editing process, created with meticulous care, that puts equal focus on the visual material as on the sound recordings and gives special attention to details of physical movements and gestures taking place around the centre of the action. Billing's films often involve music (she used to work as a music journalist as well as being the founder of a record label Make it Happen, 1998–2010), which in her hands becomes a medium of exchange, memory and reconstruction. Through her precise process of post production, that can take as much as two years work, Johanna Billing focuses on the importance of time, obtaining a unique poetical results.

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Keeping Time literally evokes the rhythm that articulates a musical performance as much as the idea of capturing the flux of time in images. Substituting narrative dialogues with music and body language Johanna Billing's production acquires a unique universal fascination that allows her to insightfully reinterpret codes of mass communication. On the occasion of the show, Johanna Billing will release, instead of a publication, a new vinyl LP record *Pulheim Jam Session*, 2016 that will record both the improvised musical soundtrack that is performed by the swedish musician Edda Magnason as much as all the 'backstage' sounds of the film. The title of this video is a word pun in which a traffic jam is mounted and set to music with a piano life jam session. "A traffic jam is in a way the most terrible and time-consuming thing you can think of and not something you would deliberately want to put yourself in" Writes Johanna Billing "But it has been challenging to think about how one could turn it into something that is almost the opposite – like a parade, perhaps, a kind of a quiet and unexpected Volksfest".

Johanna Billing was born in 1973 in Jönköping Sweden. She attended Konstfack, International College of Arts, Crafts and Design, in Stockholm where she has lived and worked with video, film and performance since graduating in 1999. Recent major solo exhibitions include *Pulheim Jam Session*, Hollybush Gardens, London (2015); *I'm Gonna Live Anyhow until I Die*, The Mac, Belfast (2012); *I'm Lost without your Rhythm*, Modern Art Oxford; *Moving In, Five Films*, Grazer Kunstverein, Graz, (2010); *Tiny Movements*, ACCA, Melbourne; *I'm lost without your rhythm*, Camden Art Centre (2009); *Taking Turns*, Kemper Museum, Kansas City; *This is How We Walk On The Moon*, Malmö Konsthall, Malmö (2008); *Forever Changes*, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel; *Keep on Doing*, Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee (2007). She has participated in survey shows such as 4th Auckland Triennial (2010); Documenta 12, Kassel (2007); Singapore Biennale (2006); 9th Istanbul Biennial; 1st Moscow Biennale (2005) and 50th Venice Biennale (2003).

Filmography

Pulheim Jam Session, 22'40" (loop), 2015
I'm Gonna Live Anyhow Until I Die, 16'29" (loop), 2012
I'm Lost Without Your Rhythm, 13'29" (loop), 2009
This Is How We Walk on the Moon, 27'20" (loop), 2007
Another Album, 28'12" (loop), 2006
Magical World, 6'12" (loop), 2005
Magic and Loss, 16'52" (loop), 2005
Look Out!, 5'20" (loop), 2003
You Don't Love Me Yet, 7'43", 2003
Where She Is At, 7'35" (loop), 2001
What Else Do You Do?, 5'00", 2001
Missing Out, 3'14" (loop), 2001
Project for a Revolution, 3'14" (loop), 2000
Graduate Show, 3'20", 1999

Discography

Pulheim Jam Session, LP: Apparent Extent, 2016
I'm Gonna Live Anyhow Until I Die, LP: Apparent Extent, 2013 (AE018)
I'm Lost Without Your Rhythm, LP: Apparent Extent, 2009 (AE008)
This Is How We Walk on the Moon, LP: Apparent Extent, 2008 (AE006)
Another Album, LP: Hollybush Gardens, 2007
Original Film Soundtracks, LP: Apparent Extent, 2007 (AE004)
You Don't Love Me Yet, CD: Index, Fondazione di Arte Contemporanea Svedese/NIFCA, Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art, 2003