

BUTLER ■ GALLERY

Yvonne Buchheim

Song Archive Project: Borrowed Air

November 3 – December 21, 2007

Yvonne Buchheim's art practice examines contemporary song culture in a visual art context. Initially, her focus on song began during a residency program in 2003 at the ACC Gallery in Weimar, Germany in response to Johann G. Herder's song collection from 1773. His theory proposed that the cultural identity of a people is reflected through their song tradition.

In response, Buchheim began a project in which she invited people from different ages and social backgrounds to perform a song of their choice in front of a video camera.

The participants were asked for spontaneous performances without any preparation, and singing—often a private act, was made public. The subsequent video works of song performances display a wide range of emotions from self-assuredness, enjoyment and dignity to embarrassment and vulnerability. The open narratives are based around the singer's performance, song lyrics, gender, age and physical appearance and demonstrate a complex set of relationships, between Buchheim, the participants, and the significance of place. To date the project comprises of over 800 non-professional singers.

The Song Archive has provided Buchheim with a framework from which to question cultural beliefs and values by playfully suggesting identity through song. In turn this provides her with a method to explore significant themes relevant to each location, creating autonomous projects in each country. The exhibition at the Butler Gallery reveals the social interaction that has taken place in Buchheim's work over the last four years and will highlight selected works from the Song Archive from six countries. Audio and visual forms are central to her practice, however in this exhibition she also incorporates laser cut text and drawing in response to specific ideas.

A site-specific piece has been created from filming undertaken during the summer of 2007 inviting Kilkenny Castle staff to participate in the Song Archive Project. This video portrait reflects a multifaceted picture—one of an Irish institution embracing both its past and its present along with welcoming a celebration of local, national, and international culture. While historical and contemporary distinctions of a place shift, in Ireland as in many places and cultures, singing still remains an integral and illuminating vibrancy in our lives. Yvonne Buchheim's work celebrates such a spirit and questions the boundaries between art and life, and between artist and audience.

Yvonne Buchheim was born in Weimar, Germany in 1972 and is based in Bristol where she is a lecturer at the University of the West of England. In 1998 she received her BA in Visual Communication Design from Fachhochschule Munchen, Germany and her Masters of Fine Art from the University of Ulster, Belfast in 2000. Through the *Song Archive* she has been awarded artist residencies and commissions in Ireland, UK, France, Germany, USA and Iran. Artist residencies include the Cheekwood Museum of the Art, Nashville, USA (2006), Paradise Arts Centre, Tehran, Iran (2005), Folkatronica, Dublin, Ireland (2005) and the ACC Galerie, Weimar, Germany (2003). She has had solo exhibitions at the Oriol Davies Gallery, Wales (2007), Syndicat Potential, Strasbourg, France (2006), Vakalo Art Gallery, Athens, Greece (2002), Triskel Arts Centre, Cork, Ireland (2002) and the Q-Arts Gallery, Derby, UK (2001). She has also been included in the North+South commissions at the Southampton City Art Gallery (2007) and in EV+A, Limerick (2006). Her next solo exhibition will be held at the Cheekwood Museum of Art, Nashville, USA in 2008.

www.song-archive.org

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