Dear Friends,

Softly and behind me, the drawn-out velvet sounds of Mazzy Star play through laptop speakers. “Fade Into You” extends into a light mist that falls over the port. Inside, the under-floor heating has made a musty smell of Jo-ey Tang’s leaves muddled with the scent from our dried flower collection. An archive of five years, where we’ve kept every flower ever shown here at Shimmer. Still echoing over the walls are messages left on David Wojnarowicz’s answering machine in the wake of ex-lover Pete Hujar’s passing. “David, give me a call; let’s talk” or “David, I have those new amino acids we spoke about” a community of recitals and rememberings.

The exhibition A Door Ajar; Singing, unpacks entrances and exits, however; they might occur. Although Mazzy Star sings about being consumed by love, our movements turn from the singular to the plural; the space where appearance and disappearance are present at once. On Saturday 10 December, Entrance 6 of A Door Ajar; Singing will commence with works by Lee Kit. Lee’s paintings and installations involve a material layering where projector light, text, and found materials such as containers, plastic bags, t-shirts and print outs, build atmospheric experiences that transude foreground into the background. Gradually the entire show will depart leaving Shimmer to rest.

EXPERIMENTING WITH OUR NEWSLETTER

We’ve often tried to find alternative ways of opening up Shimmer through experimentation and participation.

Whether through Iridescence and the Rising Wave, our collaboration with PUBLICS in Helsinki; Cookies in Rotterdam; Akwa Ibom in Athens; or inviting cultural practitioners to share the music they listen to as they work in the studio or elsewhere.

We are currently experimenting with our newsletter format by dipping into our existing content to generate new ways of engaging...
with Shimmer by reworking the documentation and ephemera in our archive. We have worked with Shimmer's designer Christophe Clarijs to make a pdf that combines the past and present.

In this past year, we invited Flora Valeska Woudstra to delve into our archive to write about image captions and water. In her second contribution in this current edition, Woudstra writes to and for the flowers that have passed their way through Shimmer over the years, as artworks, as bouquets, or as lures in Deborah Rose Bird's text Shimmer, when all you have is trashed (2014).

We also invited Martina Farrugia, our Shimmer Press coordinator to select existing material and fragments from our archive. Farrugia chose a polaroid photo from Our Time Together is Uncertain by Malin Arnell and a graphite rubbing of Shimmer's floor from Sunday Morning with the Absent Body. From Farrugia's selection, we thought that We Announce Our Love for Life by Sarah Rifky from our Across The Way with program parahosted by PUBLICS needed to be listened to again. Rifky wrote the original text following the rearrest of Alaa Abd El-Fattah by the Egyptian Government in 2020, where he currently remains.

ABOUT SHIMMER

Shimmer is a curatorial studio that experiments with exhibition-making in time and space. As a curatorial studio, we develop and maintain a space where cultural, geographic, bodily, and ageist borders are reconsidered and where art and community come together. We see this as the organisation’s core. We do not take this purpose lightly or as a thematic for a temporary program.

We take our name from ‘Shimmer, when all you love is being trashed,’ a lecture by anthropologist and feminist theorist Deborah Bird Rose in 2014. Her talk champions love and sincerity in a world of greed and denigration. We seek to make experimental exhibitions and foster relations with artists, audiences, and worldly interconnections. In this way, we hope our activities gather and stretch across and over time while providing breathing room for artists, audiences, and artworks that work with us.

7 Shimmer Special Newsletter #1: We are the rain on the open windows written by Flora Valeska Woudstra. Visit here.
9 Our Time Together is Uncertain by Marlin Arnell, 2019. Visit here.
A graphite rubbing of Shimmer's benches sent to our audience in 2020.

Black and white medium format photo of Shimmer's flowers, selected by Flora for this newsletter.
FLOWERS WERE MY EYES
(for Deborah Bird Rose)
by Flora Valeska Woudstra

ritual for absence / presence
to be read aloud to someone resting

let your body fall still into a state of soft focus; gaze resting at the inner eyelids; or through the eyelashes.

then; feel your lungs; how they facilitate the rhythm of your breathing; and find yourself situated in the space of Shimmer; you might be somewhere in the middle of the space; or maybe a bit off-center; through the window close to you; the pink light of the port's sunset glosses; sense how all of your body gazes at; absorbs; this light – bends towards it; sense also how your eyelids are petals.

the sky darkens into a blue hour; cranes; cruise ships; behind you; an enormous three metres tall rose of soft pink fleshy corolla reaches; like blades; luring in the gaze of a slender magenta lily on your other side; wall to wall these flowers vibrate softly to one another charge the space with electric invisible pollen; sticky pollen; your body; a witness.

time moves differently now; slow; backwards
into the soil; buckets of water; through cut stems; flower trucks
into the days when Shimmer wasn't Shimmer yet and shrubs reached climbed crawled up and between the bricks of the former RET building; a thousand arms stretching around Shimmer's yet to be Shimmer exterior.

i will tell you a secret now; there is an archive of flowers in Shimmer; dried stems; leaves and faded colours leaning-sleeping in bright blue plastic supermarket crates; a collection of bouquets that were once both host and visitor.

hands carry them in; lay them out;
dozens of flower bodies forming a constellation; around you; calling out in languages of colour and scent 1

holding; releasing memories stored in their axes; don't forget; they have shared more dirty harbour sky with the works than any of our lungs; someone's opinion landed on their veins; sighs and gusts of air from bodies moving vibrated through their stalks; midribs; veins.

the space; dark now; is full of memory; of no one in particular; of us as a collective; held in these dry bodies; brittle; released back in the air; dust;

slowly; feel back into your shape; your density; lungs; chest – bring a hand there to give ground;

then; like a human flower truck; move your dream body home again; crossing water; spreading pollen and seeds on the city's asphalt; now bury this memory amongst all memories you might forget; or plant a seed somewhere along the Maas river.

Address:
Level 2 Waalhaven Oostzijde 1,
3087 BM Rotterdam

We’re housed in the former RET Building

Hours:
Friday: 2pm-6pm
Saturday: 2pm-6pm

W: www.shimmershimmer.org
E: shimmerrotterdam@gmail.com
FB: @shimmerrotterdam
IG: @shimmer_rotterdam

Series B (1967) by Charlotte Posenenske and Si hot c’est toujours les water mêmes qui gagnent, cold y’a jamais de shoulder revanche (2015-present) by Jo-ey Tang.