



ART CITIES: Zurich-Pope.L & Adam Pendleton



For almost four decades, Pope.L has challenged us to confront some of the most pressing questions about American society as well as about the very nature of art. Best known for enacting arduous and provocative interventions in public spaces, Pope.L addresses issues and themes ranging from language to gender, race, social struggle, and community. Adam Pendleton is a conceptual artist known for his multi-disciplinary practice, which moves fluidly. His work centers on an engagement with language, in both the figurative and literal senses, and the re-contextualization of history through appropriated imagery to establish alternative interpretations of the present.

By Dimitrtis Lempesis

Photo: Galerie Eva Presenhuber Archive

Pope.L and Adam Pendleton present their joint exhibition “**No Thing: Pope.L, Adam Pendleton**” at Galerie Eva Presenhuber. Since the 1970s, **Pope.L** has created a multidisciplinary oeuvre, including performance, installation, painting, drawing, sculpture, objects, and writing. Pope.L creates scenarios and poetics in order to address issues of category and identicalness usually parlayed via his interest in language, nation, gender, race, and class. In his “**crawls**” one of his best-known performance sets, Pope.L literally crawls (alone or with other participants) through the hallways of buildings and city streets. In doing so, he draws attention to marginalized positions in society, and to the contradictions and double-binds through which we perceive ourselves and others. His performances often involve local citizens and thus build temporary communities who share the experience and struggle. Similar to his performances, Pope.L’s pictorial and sculptural works focus on bringing together disparate materials and symbols that create a poetics of the puzzle. The artist constructs works that intersect artistic practice and social meaning, such as the ambiguity of color in his “**Skin Set Drawings**”. In his sculptures, he often uses materials connected to manual labor or builds motorized objects. This is a reference to 1920s Constructivism and Fluxus. Some of Pope.L’s works and statements are straightforward while others are exceedingly absurd and enigmatic. However, the works always have a tone that sticks and irks the consumer. **Adam Pendleton**’s practice includes painting, silkscreen, publishing, collage, and video. He moves seamlessly between genres, creating works that provoke reflection on language, history, politics, and subjectivity. Pendleton appropriates language as well as images, drawing from different contexts and periods in a multiperspectival approach. Cut out and isolated from any original background, reconfigured into layers, grids, and single letters, visual and verbal material becomes experienceable in its abstract corporeality. The works critically juxtapose sources of diverse origin and varying legibility, often obscuring and problematizing their identities by subjecting them to multiple rounds of processing, overwriting, and montage. In his recent series of works on Mylar, Pendleton frequently incorporates images of traditional African masks; “**Untitled (masks)**” (2018), a new 20-part work, iterates on a single found photograph of a Dan mask, which Pendleton has photocopied, enlarged, and layered with zig-zags, hatching, and brush strokes. Techniques of marking and masking, together with the clear Mylar film that serves as a substrate, work to compose a complex play of transparency and opacity, disclosure and concealment.

MITCHELL-INNES & NASH



Left: Pope.L, Next to Last Silk Screen (Red), 2018, Silkscreen in lightbox, 65 x 49.5 cm, © Pope.L – Photo: James Prinz, Courtesy the artist & Galerie Eva Presenhuber. Right: Pope.L, King Actar's Wife, 2018, Acktar Light Absorbent Foil (Spectral Black) on panel, C-stand, pen light, 40.5 x 30.5 cm, © Pope.L – Photo: James Prinz, Courtesy the artist & Galerie Eva Presenhuber