

Berlin

Studio for Propositional Cinema

TANYA LEIGHTON

Kurfürstenstrasse 156

September 3–October 8

If you arrive here during open hours only to find the door locked, the lights off, and the blinds down, don't panic. The gallery is open: Just duck under the half-closed security gate. This is Düsseldorf-based collective Studio for Propositional Cinema's second solo exhibition here, and it is fittingly titled "(TO THE SPECTATOR:)." A number of wall-mounted text works even address the viewer directly.

The space's architecture is thrown into relief by electric yellow and iridescent silver lettering in sans-serif capitals, elegantly following the lines of arched doorways and walls. Works such as *BEING OBSERVED SHE TURNS HERSELF INTO AN IMAGE FOR HIM BUT FROM WHICH HE IS CROPPED* (all works 2016) follow those of 1960s Conceptualists such as Lawrence Weiner and Art & Language, for whom text is a means of referencing material states, with words and their physical mediums together constituting the work. Here, networked digital culture is evoked—itsself often seen as immaterial, despite the physical resources required to power the Internet. The letterforms here on view are delimited with clean, minimal aesthetics, yet manage to fervently ignite our imaginations so that we might wonder, What's the story here? A broken heart, a breakup?

The importance of spectatorship is emphasized in the exhibition's eponymous work, in which silver and gold spray paint delineate sentences on a grid of a hundred sheets of graph paper. It calls to mind a point from Roland Barthes's 1967 essay "The Death of the Author": Without the reader, all is immaterial, and there is only absence, erasure. The spectator is the negative of the artist, the foil. This is a dialectical relationship, and Studio for Propositional Cinema is awaiting your presence.



Studio for Propositional Cinema, *BEING OBSERVED SHE TURNS HERSELF INTO AN IMAGE FOR HIM BUT FROM WHICH HE IS CROPPED*, 2016, stenciled spray paint on wall. Installation view.

— *Louisa Elderton*