

MOUNTAIN

Have you ever heard of happiness springing from a deep well of sorrow?

EJ Hill - Janne Höltermann - Joshua Kent - Naomi Elena Ramirez



Opening Reception: May 6th, 2016 | 7-10 PM

Readings by Joni Murphy and Natasha Stagg: May 14th, 2016 | 7-9 PM

This exhibition pays homage to the legacy and inquisitive spirit of the enigmatic Dutch artist Bas Jan Ader. The artists in this exhibition all share an affinity with the late artist's exploration of performance, poetics, life and death. Bas Jan Ader's final work was a transatlantic voyage titled *In Search of the Miraculous*, which resulted in the artist's disappearance.

The title for this exhibition comes from a line in the poem below that was written by the artist's mother shortly after he was lost at sea. On October 12, 1975, Johanna Adriana Ader-Appels claims to have had a telepathic premonition of her son's death, sixth months before his deserted vessel, *Ocean Wave*, was found off the coast of Ireland:

*From the deep waters of sleep I wake up to consciousness.
In the distance I hear a train rumbling in the early morning.
It is going East and passes the border. Then it will stop.*

*I feel my heart beating too. It will go on beating for some time.
Then it will stop.
I wonder if the little heart that has beaten with mine, has stopped.
When he passed the border of birth, I laid him at my breast,
Rocked him in my arms.
He was very small then.*

*A white body of a man, rocked in the arms of the waves,
Is very small too.*

*What are we in the infinity of ocean and sky?
A small baby at the breast of eternity.*

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Have you ever heard of happiness

Springing from a deep well of sorrow?

Of love, springing from pain and despondency, agony and death?

Such is mine.

The artworks on display in this exhibition resonate with the tender words of the artist's mother. Can one face death and impermanence with a character of fearlessness? Can one rise above the pain of loss to seek a new appreciation for the ephemerality of life? To find meaning in the midst of grief may help us to better understand the profound contradictions of lived experience. On the one hand, there is the desire to build deep connections and interpersonal relations. On the other hand, there is the necessity for a seemingly abnormal capacity for letting go.

EJ Hill's endurance-based performances examine limitations of the body. In *Blow*, the artist transforms the simple act of breathing into a self-destructive exercise in near asphyxiation. Naomi Elena Ramirez's video *I Love You* invites the viewer into an intimate moment with an anonymous female figure that has her back turned to the camera. Her words evoke longing, sadness, joy, pain, and a whole host of changing emotions with every utterance. Janne Höltermann's video *Horizonzoom* portrays a vastness of space that is mesmerizing. The expanse of sky and endless ocean waves create an existential meditation that feels both grounding and groundlessly infinite. Joshua Kent's *The flowers of the field are free*, is photographic documentation of a performance printed on silk crepe de Chine. The work portrays an anonymous self-portrait/still-life memorial.

EJ Hill (b. Los Angeles, CA) lives and works in Los Angeles, CA and New York, NY. Hill's practice incorporates writing, endurance-based performance, painting, and sculpture to examine the many ways in which physical and ideological bodies may transcend their afflictions. Recent exhibitions include *Bloody Red Sun of Fantastic L.A.*, PIASA, Paris, FR (2015); *Surface of Color*, The Pit, Los Angeles, CA (2015); and *Writing Bodies*, EFA Project Space, New York, NY (2015). He is a 2015 recipient of the California Community Foundation Fellowship for Visual Artists and a 2015-16 Artist-in-Residence at The Studio Museum in Harlem. Hill received his BFA from Columbia College Chicago in 2011 and an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2013.

<http://www.ejhill.info>

Janne Höltermann (b. Dortmund, Germany) currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She graduated from Muthesius Academy Kiel, Germany and from Massachusetts College of Art and Design Boston. She has been awarded residencies at Yaddo (NY) twice, Flux Factory (LIC), received travel grants from the DAAD and participated in the Bronx Museum's AIM program. From 2011-2013 she was the Sullivan Visiting Artist at Wesleyan University, CT. Her most recent work "Afterglow" has been funded by the film funding foundation of Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein (FFHSH). Her work is shown internationally. Amongst others she showed at ICA Philadelphia, Deutscher Künstlerbund Berlin, Museum of

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Contemporary Art Basel, Matadero de Legazpi Madrid, NURTUREart Brooklyn, Bronx Museum of the Arts, WPA Washington and MICA Baltimore, C.A.R. Zollverein Essen and at Kunsthalle Bremen.

<http://www.janne-hoeltermann.com/>

Joshua Kent (b. Chicago, IL) is an interdisciplinary artist working primarily in performance, writing, and sculpture. Informed by years spent within intentional communities addressing affordable housing, Kent's work examines the repurposing and quotation of materials alongside poetics of the commonplace.

<http://joshuakentworksamples.tumblr.com/>

Naomi Elena Ramirez (b. Hermosillo, Mexico) is a multidisciplinary artist whose work embraces and fuses visual art, performance art, video art, and contemporary dance, and the process by which the different mediums can inform each other. Naomi has an MFA in Visual Art from Vermont College of Fine Arts and a BA in Dramatic Art/Dance from the University of California at Berkeley. Her work has been exhibited by NurtureArt Gallery, BRIC Contemporary Arts online exhibitions, Wallplay Gallery, The Situation Room (LA), Gallery 107 (MA), New Voices in Live Performance at The Center for Performance Research, amongst others. She curates Beaver an exhibition, performance, and discussion event that delves into contemporary feminist perspectives on pornography, gender performance, and female sexual self-expression. She lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

www.naomielenaramirez.com

During the run of this exhibition MOUNTAIN is pleased to present a reading event on the Saturday May 14th with Joni Murphy and Natasha Stagg. They will be reading from each of their debut novels. **Joni Murphy** published her first novel, *Double Teenage*, with BookThug this year. She is an artist and writer currently living in New York City. **Natasha Stagg** published her first novel, *Surveys*, with Semiotext(e) / Native Agents this year. She is an editor and writer for several magazines in New York.

<http://jonimurphy.com/>

<https://natashastagg.com/>

MOUNTAIN is an artist-run apartment gallery in Bushwick presenting exhibitions, performances, and screenings by emerging artists. The gallery is open during scheduled events or by appointment only. MOUNTAIN was founded by Michael Fleming in 2016. For more information, please visit <http://mountain.xhbtr.com/> or contact: mountain.bushwick@gmail.com. Like MOUNTAIN on [Facebook](#) to hear about upcoming exhibitions and events.

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