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BRIDGIT
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Opening with a monologue that guides us through its entirety, Charlotte Prodger’s BRIDGIT, 2016, is a visual essay, a meandering of sorts. Shot entirely on Prodger’s iPhone, the work turns inside out the highly subjective and increasingly ubiquitous form of the personal narrative created through handheld devices and social media. The immediacy and intimacy of iPhone footage makes it an expressive extension of the artist’s movement through space. Her spoken narrative— in which her voice periodically switches with that of another female— takes us through specific moments related and unrelated to the more or less static images her gaze rests on. By sharing reflections on past events and recent encounters and connecting them to an ancient history, Prodger inflects her references and images with new meanings. As one scene leads to the next, the footage and spoken narrative fragments build on one another. The scenes each offer a pause, a momentary break, yet they accrue to form a journey through intersecting biological and geological existences.

The operations that unfold in BRIDGIT through the use of the moving image are central to the entire exhibition. The content and formal aspects of the video are mirrored throughout the other works Prodger includes. While BRIDGIT is contained within its own room, the adjacent space is engaged as an architectural foil to the film. There, Prodger has created a large-scale sculpture that connects the dimensions of the projection screen to those of the building’s prominent steel doors. A powder-coated steel bar structure sits on the floor, forming three joined yet open rectangular sections that subtly redefine the dimensions of the room. Titled Machrie Moor, 2017, the work evokes the prehistoric standing stones on the Scottish island of Arran that appear in the film. The sculpture hinges the video to the building. It draws a line from the ancient mankind rock formations to the contemporary site of the exhibition. The sculpture works as a connective point, not unlike the transitional moments that comprise BRIDGIT. Physically, the sculpture carves the space and unravels its form. It reflects dimensions, shapes, and historical material in, and out of, the video and the institutional architecture.

New works on paper included in the exhibition take a cue from BRIDGIT: letterpress prints feature references extracted from the film, further slowing down perception of the work through even more static contemplation, as well as in the laborious process of making the print. In addition to the framed prints on view, Prodger includes a Risograph handout, with the entirely of the voiceover printed, so that viewers can read and access the text separately from the temporal experience of listening to speech within the film.

The title of one of the prints, Brizo of Delos, 2017, alludes to the name of the Neolithic deity that hovers over the video while breaking it down, suggesting possible original namesakes, reordering, and hybrids in the word “Brigid.” An extract from Julian Cope’s 1998 Modern Antiquarian is quoted on the print, a piece of text that is also read within the film. In it, Cope describes how Bridgit could not have been the deity’s original name, since Neolithic names are all single syllables. He goes on to list all her names known to date—Brid, Brig, Brizo of Delos, the Cretan Britomartis, and others—confidently coming to rest on what he believes to be her true original name, Bree. This slippage of namesakes for Bridgit evolves over centuries. The deity transforms over time, taking on new monikers and meanings in each cultural moment in which she is evoked. Though eternal, she is not safe from human interventions into her identity that fundamentally change her character. Her shifting status over the course of human history is contrasted with the biological scale of time and reflects its impact on the construction of self, a theme addressed throughout the film.

This aspect of identity transformation is also emphasized in the letterpress print The Child Is Mother to the Adult, 2017, where Prodger uses the name of another female figure, Allucquère Rosanne “Sandy” Stone. She repeats the varied iterations of this name of this pioneer of transgender theory, sound engineer, writer, and artist (a device she also uses in Brizo of Delos). Here Prodger includes text taken from Stone’s 1995 book The War of Desire and Technology at the Close of the Mechanical Age, which is also read in the film’s monologue. The extract obliquely explains one function of personal names—as identification—pointing to practices in which names change over a lifetime, reflecting stages of life and varying circumstances. As the works on paper and BRIDGIT emphasize, at each moment we are different people. How do we accommodate this instability?

Fluidity is an essential part of the structure of BRIDGIT, as layer upon layer of transitional moments chart a path through subjectivity and memory. Small details, instants, conversations, colors, and places collect to form a single identity. Each scene in the film conjures the sense of being in a unique moment. Coincidences and connections are later assimilated into a personal story that always remains incomplete. In one instance of scene fragments that intersect and split apart, the still camera captures a forest as Prodger remembers a time when she was working at a home for the elderly and on the verge of coming out. As she switches to a later memory in the next scene, the camera is focused on a solid ocher color as Prodger recalls that while being administered anesthesia, she was told to think of something nice to hold in her mind as she went under. She quickly decides to think of a field; trying to get the right one, she cycles through several not-so-right ones. The forest featured in the earlier scene suddenly changes its reference point. No longer representing the wilderness of the stone circle region of Aberdeenshire where Prodger grew up, it becomes a version of the lush green field she tries to evoke as a mental image. While transformed, it continues to relate to the earlier scene in which she describes the landscape of her hometown. The question of Prodger’s search for the most pleasing landscape underscores the film’s construction as a series of ideal and inevitably inaccurate images. Later, Prodger recounts anecdotes about various queer relationships being misperceived as mothers and daughters, aunts and nieces, or siblings. The subject of the film continues to slip. The perception of a single person further adjusts when it concerns relationships, also informed by social and cultural norms and biases. Who are we? And who are we when we are together?

Prodger ends BRIDGIT by returning to the subject of anesthesia, describing how patients, when they come to, are often unaware that time has passed. Mentioning a few of the reactions that emerge from going under, from aggressiveness to confusion, Prodger creates a metaphor for any period of time now elapsed. How do we account for it? What happens when it dawned on us that something has changed without our being able to pinpoint when and how? These central questions frame this exhibition. Using different forms, Prodger uses slight shifts of positioning and perspective to communicate that memory, identity, and reality itself, remains elusive and inconsistent. Everything and everyone is caught up in the passage of time.
Installation view.
The anaesthetist is small and Australian, a bit out-of-date, with big glasses, they might have been red. Now we’re in the small operating theatre, I can hear people in there but can’t see them, and another nurse comes in and says “do you want some help and they say no, thank you.”

One of the great difficulties facing anyone who attempts to unravel the problems of the ancient world is that of names. The delites of antiquity have a very great number of names. Not only were they known by different names in different places, but they were also classified and reclassified. Researchers often had at least three different phases: old, middle aged and young, which were all known by different names in one place.

I was oblivious. At the time I was working as a care assistant at Inchnadamph House, a residential home for the elderly near Drumnadrochit on Loch Ness, I had come out to a couple of friends but hadn’t yet told my parents or anyone else in my life. I had all the closeted libidinal energy but my attentions were focused on all this entropy.

When I was 18 and 19, in 1992 and 1993, on the brink of coming out, growing up in the austere agricultural landscape of rural Aberdeenshire, taking acid tabs called Strawberries and ecstasy out, growing up in the austere agricultural landscape of rural Aberdeenshire. I was oblivious. At the time I was working as a care assistant at Inchnadamph House, a residential home for the elderly near Drumnadrochit on Loch Ness, I had come out to a couple of friends but hadn’t yet told my parents or anyone else in my life.

Wooo......yeh new stuff on, um, on UIQ. This one's from Charlotte Prodger: Subtotal. This one Robotic Handshakes in 4D. Yeah out to Ollie. This mix, oooh this mix! Golden Teacher up at the top of the hour. Maybe run it last thing actually. Cos how am I gonna go after that.

It's all about you, every part of you. But you're not there.

Names themselves weren't codified as personal descriptors until the 20th century. The concept of one’s public and private self, separateness or together, changes with age and experience (as do the definitions of public and private); and the name or the label or the identity package is an expression of that concept. The child is mother to the adult, but the adult is not merely the child a bit later in time.

I'm on an island reading things Sandy Stone wrote in 1994 about virtual systems theory, technology as praxis, and how a disembodied subjectivity messes with wholeness. I'm reading this on the back of a card that looks out onto another one. One island that island is a community of nuns who are undertaking four-year isolation retreats, off-limits to visitors.

Sandy Stone is talking about bandwidth and reality. How a hot medium has a wide bandwidth, and a cool medium had a narrow bandwidth. Participating in a narrow bandwidth (for example at that time communicating via a computer, with only text on screen) we engage more deeply in certain ways, more obsessively even.

A couple of weeks later, at the end of a long day in my studio going round in circles, I don’t know why but I had googled ‘standing stone’ and ‘lesbians’. One after another they come into view and then suddenly I’m asleep and leaving awake. Usually there’s no sense that no time has passed. Some people wake up then fall back under some other people become aggressive when they wake up. Some don’t know they’ve been asleep. ‘When’s the operation’, they say, thinking it’s before instead of after.

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Charlotte Prodger: Subtotal

BRIDGIT, 2016, installation view.
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SculptureCenter

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Still image from *BRIDGIT*, 2016.
Checklist of Works in the Exhibition

**BRIDGIT**, 2016
Single-channel HD video
32 minutes

**Brizo of Delos**, 2017
Letterpress print
13.8 x 16.9 inches (35 x 43 cm)

**The Child is Mother to the Adult**, 2017
Letterpress print
13.8 x 16.9 inches (35 x 43 cm)

**Machrie Moor**, 2017
Powder-coated steel
158.5 x 88.5 x 1.5 inches
(402.6 x 224.8 x 3.8 cm)

Risograph transcript of **BRIDGIT**, 2016
Risograph print
11.4 x 16.1 inches (29 x 41 cm)

All works courtesy the artist, Hollybush Gardens, London, and Koppe Astner, Glasgow

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**Brush of Delos**, 2017
Letterpress print
13.8 x 16.9 inches (35 x 43 cm)

**The Child is Mother to the Adult**, 2017
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