

CRITICS' PICKS

[CURRENT](#) [PAST](#)

New York

- Ed Atkins
- Guðmundur Thoroddsen
- Anne Collier
- Dor Guez
- Kenneth Josephson
- Yve Laris Cohen
- Carlos Reyes
- John Houck
- Ward Shelley
- Sara Greenberger Rafferty
- Lionel Maunz
- Nasreen Mohamedi
- David Hammons
- Zarouhie Abdalian
- Hilton Als
- "The Illusive Eye"
- Silvia Gruner
- "Printing Women: Three Centuries of Female Printmakers 1570–1900"
- Robert Ryman

Los Angeles

- "The Ocular Bowl"
- Catherine Fairbanks
- Saul Fletcher
- Sandra Gibson and Luis Recoder
- "Performing the Grid"

San Francisco

- Samara Golden

Chicago

- "Monster Roster: Existentialist Art in Postwar Chicago"
- Courtney Cooper
- Charlotte Moorman

Cleveland

- Xavier Cha

Seattle

- Martha Rosler

Washington, DC

- "WONDER"

Toronto

- Leslie Hewitt

Mexico City

- Mario García Torres

London

- Dennis Morris
- Hany Armanious
- Charlotte Moth
- DAS INSTITUT

Glasgow

- Dan Mitchell

Munich

"La Voix Humaine"

KUNSTVEREIN MÜNCHEN

Galeriestraße 4

January 25, 2014–March 30, 2014

In Francis Poulenc's one-act opera *La Voix humaine* (The Human Voice, 1958)—his adaption of Jean Cocteau's play by the same name—a lone woman sings into a telephone for the entirety of the action, projecting the pain she feels toward her lover, presumably on the other end of the line, onto the object of the phone itself. Rapper R. Kelly's similarly virtuosic video performance for his 2006 song "Real Talk" is based on the same premise, and both works are included in "*La Voix humaine*," a group exhibition including Frances Stark, Erica Scourti, Amelie von Wulffen, and Kalup Linzy, among others. The variety of works on view take up the timely subject of the human voice in relation to its channels of amplification or distribution and to newly developing artificial forms of vocal communication—an area currently being navigated in technology and culture, seen most prominently in Spike Jonze's latest release *Her*.

Tyler Coburn's *NaturallySpeaking*, 2013–14, includes two screens that one can view from a minimalist daybed; a voice-recognition software instruction manual, featuring directives for enunciating correctly as well as emphasizing clarity and isolation, is read back into its own program. In Cécile B. Evans's *Agnes (The End Is Near)*, 2013–14, the twinkly voice of the artist's young female spam bot—who currently resides on London's Serpentine Galleries website as a set of algorithms—anxiously speculates that she will lose her "home," when the server on which she exists is eventually destroyed. In Cally Spooner's *Damning Evidence Illicit Behaviour Seemingly Insurmountable Great Sadness Terminated in Any Manner*, 2014, an opera singer performing in recitative gives a human voice to a betrayed, anonymous public, by singing anonymous online comments from YouTube (Lance Armstrong for his drug scandal, or Beyoncé for choosing to lip-synch at Barack Obama's inauguration instead of singing live). The delivery is consistently overblown and tragic, befitting the histrionic tone of the commenters and revealing the way language changes when it is typed into a digital void. Crucially, however, Spooner highlights the inevitable consequences of a pressured culture that simultaneously desires both high performance and authenticity.

— [Laura McLean-Ferris](#)



Cally Spooner, *Damning Evidence Illicit Behaviour Seemingly Insurmountable Great Sadness Terminated in Any Manner*, 2014, mixed media, dimensions variable.

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