

# NEON

PATHS  
ΔΙΑΔΡΟΜΕΣ

## NEON @ ReMap 4 | Athens ECHOES OF SILENCE

8-30 SEPTEMBER 2013

HANS BELLMER | JOSEPH BEUYS | JOHN BOCK | LOUISE BOURGEOIS | MARK BRADFORD  
HELEN CHADWICK | FISCHLI & WEISS | ROBERT GOBER | PIERRE HUYGHE | NIKOS KESSANLIS  
SOFIA KOSMAOGLOU | SHERRIE LEVINE | SARAH LUCAS | JUAN MUNOZ | ROSEMARIE TROCKEL

Curators: Douglas Fogle | Dimitris Paleocrassas

The French philosopher Gaston Bachelard once described houses as “shelters for daydreaming.” Domestic spaces in the literary imagination swerve between the extremes of Bachelard’s safe places for poetic reveries on the one hand and the darker psychologically uncanny “haunted” spaces on the other. Taking its title from Rosemarie Trockel’s fairy tale-like ceramic mirror, *Echoes of Silence* brings together a collection of works that each in their own way speak to the way in which domesticity and the home shape our individual and collective identities in both their conscious and unconscious manifestations.

In this home we see an absurd and at times pathetically dysfunctional family coming together in the form of a menacing *pater familias* in the shape of a punching bag dummy in Juan Muñoz’s untitled sculpture from 1994, as well as a mother who has emerged straight out of the sensationalist British tabloids in Sarah Lucas’s *Fat, Forty, and Fabulous*. Hiding a knife behind its back, Muñoz’s figure speaks to a kind of desolate desperation and despair while Lucas’s rotund maternal figure evokes the Dionysian excess of a culture built upon the promise of instant gratification. Together they form a dark portrait of the unconscious of the prototypical Western family. Their adolescent child broods in the basement of the house in the form of the animated manga character Annlee who the artist Pierre Huyghe imbues with the digitized voice of the astronaut Neal Armstrong as she recites passages from Jules Verne’s exploration fantasy *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. Raising existential questions about the character of our personal identities Annlee speaks to our own uncertainty about who we are and how we tell stories about ourselves in order to negotiate the world around us. In Joseph Beuys’s *Felt Suit* or Hans Bellmer’s *La demi-Poupée*, we see this narrative developed further as opposing images of the body as channeled into the “proper” bourgeois form of a business suit on the one hand, or the wild, unconscious, or even science fiction fantasy of a completely malleable bodily form on the other. Using a different strategy, the Swiss duo Peter Fischli and David Weiss question our domestic environment with the wonder of a daydream as they present us with an uncanny replication of everyday objects from the domestic world around us, in this case construction materials, magically rendered out of carved polystyrene. In the end, Rosemarie Trockel’s messy and almost volcanic polished mirror throws our reflected identities back at us by invoking the foundational cultural narcissism of the contemporary world as embodied in the Greek myth of Echo and Narcissus. In a world in which the historical narrative of domestic harmony is as much a mythical creation as any piece of fiction, these artists ask us to think about the way in which our identities are constructed and manufactured. In the end, we are the makers of our own collective destinies despite the narcissistic pressures exerted on us by images of the happy nuclear family that are constantly broadcast by the consumer culture that surrounds us.