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PHOEBE BERGLUND

Great Expectations

May 4, 2019–June 16, 2019

Reception: Saturday May 4, 6–9pm

Schedule of performances:

May 4: 6–8pm

May 19: 5–7pm

June 2: 5–7pm

June 16: 5–7pm

Characters are one place to start. Actors getting *into* character: grimacing or expressionless or smiling luridly at nothing. Lovers in an entwined embrace that veers toward restrained wrestling: hands clutching limbs, reaching for a head to hold, a resting position after the tumult of positioning. A supine sleeper, holding a leg perpendicular: a window onto a seemingly inactive subject.

These and other characters, let's call them "dancers," punctuate Phoebe Berglund's exhibition *Great Expectations*, occupying the frame of a genre that has been stripped of its assets: plot, narrative progression, character development. They move between citation and abstraction in the work's uptake of the well-known Dickens classic, reframing fictional continuity as episodic activity staged sporadically within the gallery.

Inside the gallery are objects, let's call them "sculptures," whose temporality is more ongoing. Take these sculptures by Arkadiy Ryabin: a fountain that seeps mist (the mist-maker), concrete casts that index the shape of circulating commodities (surrogates). Surrogates syphon energy from the body, turning expressive in relation to the body's drained affect and desubjectification under late capitalism.

Outside the gallery, Dickens' 19th century London has transmogrified into 21st century New York. The dancers drag this urban landscape inside: they organize into the outlines of high rises, reconfigure their bodies as sculptures that pass for public art, and encode the ruinous sight of real estate development into the soft architectures of their amassed bodies. Outside is also Broadway, and the elastic repertoire of dance and theater histories acted out on its stages. The dancers seize and adapt phrases and gestures from this repository. These phrases are like nouns endowed with

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info@lubov.nyc

(347) 496-5833

373 Broadway, #207
New York, NY 10013

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new adjectives in sentences that remind us of a text which is in the process of being rewritten.

Such enactments and reenactments produce new alignments: between embodied memory, static constructions, and choreographic movement. Clusters of dancers move between these registers under the sign of looping, forming temporary assemblages or compositions approaching sculpture, falling in and out of objecthood. As Kathy Acker writes in her own *Great Expectations*, “there is no lineality of time time is an almost recurring conical.”

—Rachel Valinsky, New York, April 2019.

Phoebe Berglund is an artist based in NYC. She uses choreographic methods to create situations that consider relationships between object/subject, animal/human, human/machine. Berglund earned her MFA in Combined Media at Hunter College and is the recipient of the Leutz/Reidel Fellowship at the Universitat der Kunst Berlin. Recently she has presented her work at MoMA PS1, Villa Empain Boghossian Foundation Brussels, The Center for Performance Research, Movement Research at Judson Church, NADA NY, Material Art Fair Mexico City. Berglund has an upcoming project at Storm King Art Center in 2019.

Collaborators: Juli Brandano, Zoe Brezsny, Marion Storm Budwig, Sujung Chang, Jessica Cook, Ezra Fierman, Terry Hempfling, Nikima Jagudajev, Kyli Kleven, Arkadiy Ryabin.

For any inquiries, please contact info@lubov.nyc

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