

# Teacher Guide

## Telepathic Improvisation

On view September 16, 2017–January 7, 2018



*Telepathic Improvisation* (video stills), 2017. Single-channel HD video: color, sound, 19:27 minutes. All works courtesy the artists, Ellen de Bruijne Projects, and Marcelle Alix.

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## **EXHIBITION OVERVIEW**

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- *Telepathic Improvisation* is the first U.S. solo exhibition by Berlin-based artist duo Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz. The exhibition consists of a new moving image work entitled *Telepathic Improvisation* (2017) as well as two new sculptures.
- Boudry / Lorenz often make densely interwoven allusions to historical events, artistic traditions, and individuals in laying the groundwork for their filmed performances. Abstract elements and actions take on multiple meanings open to nuanced interpretation while still making specific reference to current and historical social conditions.
- *Telepathic Improvisation*, the title of the film and exhibition, draws its name from the 1974 score by experimental electronic composer Pauline Oliveros. Members of the audience are instructed early on in the film to communicate telepathically across time and space with the elements, objects, and performers on-screen, as well as provide feedback in real time if their imagined action is carried out.
- The film's closing speech characterizing protest and resistance is an adaptation of a political statement written by the German left-wing militant Ulrike Meinhoff in 1968, two years before joining the Red Army Faction.
- The filmed performance challenges the idea that images are mere depictions of actions, especially in the political sphere, and questions the relationship between the fantasy of an action and the action itself. Viewer-participants are left with the unspoken question: "Do your fantasies impact what you're seeing here?"
- Boudry/Lorenz regularly collaborate with performers and do not appear in the films themselves.

## KEY QUESTIONS

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- How does the film use abstraction to challenge the presumed non-agency of images and objects? How are the sculptural elements present in the film as well as the gallery “animated” via their interactions with each other, the human performers, and the viewing audience?
- How are the objects and images connected, or disconnected, from their conventional meanings and associations? In what ways are these objects and materials gendered, and how does the film dispute or defy these categorizations?
- How does the film layer actions and occurrences across time and space? To what extent does telepathic communication occur between the audience and performers, and how does this contribute to the imagining of alternative realities?
- What are some moments of transformation present in the film? How do these transformations contribute to the agency and autonomy of the elements on-screen? How does this affect your viewing and interaction with the sculptural objects that are physically present in the gallery?

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

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### LANGUAGE ARTS

What point of view is being expressed through the film? Is there a plot or narrative? Does the film or installation feature a protagonist? Describe the film’s setting and its presentation in the gallery. What are some of the symbols and imagery featured in the film and installation and what are some of their possible interpretations?

### THEATER ARTS

What are the theatrical elements included in the film and installation? Who or what are the actors in the film, and what are the props? How could the definition of performers be expanded to include objects, lights, movements and sounds? What role do members of the audience play? How is the installation distinct from traditional gallery and theater presentations?

### SOCIAL STUDIES

What are some historical examples of social movements that included protests? What do you think are the goals of protest movements, and how are they achieved? How do you visualize “protests,” and what other actions could be characterized as protest or resistance? How does the speaker in the film distinguish protest from resistance?