

GALLERY GUIDE

ENGLISHES
NICOLINE VAN HARSKAMP
PROJECT ARTS
CENTRE
15 FEBRUARY –
31 MARCH 2018

Works presented in the gallery:

1–5.

Portrait of an Englishes Collector, single channel video,
2015, 22'29 (excerpt)

Her Production, single channel video, 2014, 4'07

Wer Mae Hao, single channel video, 2015, 7'44

Darling Good Night, single channel video, 2016, 6'30
(excerpt)

A Romance in Five Acts and Twenty-one Englishes,
single channel video, 2015, 6'30 (excerpt)

6.

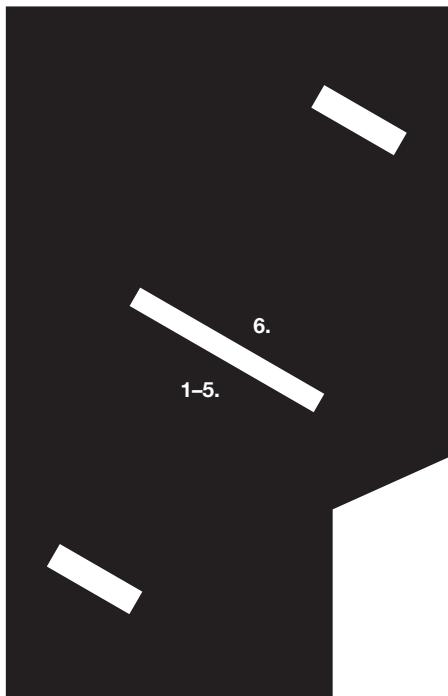
PDGN, single channel video, 2016

Work presented in the foyer:

7.

PDGN, single channel video, text projection, 2016

Gallery floorplan



Foyer floorplan



ENGLISHES

Nicoline van Harskamp

Lívia Páldi

'I produce and collect recordings of spoken language and other forms of 'first-person' language, such as autobiographies, letters and online conversational writing. Through the informal nature of these – an interrupted thought, a lapsus, an illogic argument – individual thought processes manifest themselves clearer than in written language. All works make use of English as the main language, for practical reasons at first, but eventually also as the subject matter of the works.'

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'In the project Englishes (2014–16) I explored the artistic and emancipatory possibilities that the worldwide creation of different types of English brings. I was looking for a new Patois, a link language that includes a multiplicity of voices from all regions, classes and generations, rather than a new Latin that serves professional elites mainly. The works developed in a thematic way, along certain linguistic topics that are relevant to the development of a global link language.'

(from the artist's statement)

ENGLISHES, Nicoline van Harskamp's first solo exhibition in Ireland, features five of the eight episodic films from her *Englishes* series (comprising interview, performance, and scripted fiction, exploring the myriad variations of English spoken between people as a link language), and *PDGN*, a video installation that puts forward a desirable (if unlikely) global link language for the future. This video work is subtitled with Irish subtitles which have been specially produced for this exhibition. In an accompanying video work, projected in the main foyer of Project, lines from the script for *PDGN* are being remade again and again in different possibilities and distortions.

Englishes (2014–16) explores the widespread use and modification of the English language by its non-native speakers, or 'Englishes'. Researched and produced in collaboration with a range of art

institutions and universities, each video work engages a particular area of linguistics such as phonology, pragmatics or translation. Van Harskamp has worked together with, among others: language teachers, linguists, language inventors, multi-lingual children and actors in order to study and explore ‘Englishes’ and the particulars and conceptualisation of this transient type of language.

Inspired by the fluid and dynamic nature that is fuelled by the intentional, deliberate and functional changes introduced by their speakers, the artist envisages the dissolution of English into varieties of future ‘Englishes’, a common and ever-growing linguistic resource.

Interested in the complex nature of language change, van Harskamp also draws attention to: the history of English as an international language; the ideological, political, social, and educational issues underpinning its global dominance, economic and technical position; and the demonstration of power via linguistic imperialism.

The compilation presents: *Portrait of an Englishes Collector*, 2015; *Her Production*, 2014; *Wer Mae Hao*, 2015; *Darling Good Night*, 2016; and *A Romance in Five Acts and Twenty-one Englishes*, 2015.

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Made in 2016, *PDGN* is a short fictional film that portrays a future in which the world is no longer run by national governments or global corporations, and that is neither utopian nor dystopian. A new link language is seen to develop between people across the world through voluntary self-instruction. The video’s script was constructed from actual spoken, non-native English that was recorded as part of the artist’s previous work and in a series of workshops.

The language was further developed by applying common and expected factors of language evolution in the areas of syntax, lexicon, and phonetics. These ‘distorting factors’ were conceptualised with the help of academics in fields such as creole studies, computational linguistics and language acquisition as well as Esperantists, recreational language inventors, and the film’s lead actresses.

The mixed language participants lent their voices to the script on topics such as the tower of Babel, cultures of naming, female heroes, and how to tie two sticks together with a rope.

Some aspects of language and narrative were borrowed from feminist fiction that proposes systems of language-change, such as Marge Piercy’s *Women on the Edge of Time* (1976), and Suzette Haden Elgin’s *Native Tongue* (1984). The resulting initial dialogue is not conducted in standard English, but is nonetheless understandable with careful reading. The video is subtitled in Irish for its Dublin showing.

Versions with Dutch, Swahili, Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, Spanish, Swedish, German and French subtitles exist, but no subtitles exist in contemporary standard English.

Project's foyer hosts a video projection of lines from the PDGN script that are 'distorted' in various lexical or syntactic ways. This installation suggests an instruction method for a future global link language – a continuous flow of varieties developed through experience and exposure, rather than learned through a central set of rules.

About the exhibited works:

***Portrait of an Englishes Collector*, single channel video, 2015**

The video depicts a fictional amateur linguist conducting a remote study of the 'Englishes' spoken in the remotest corners of the globe. Through a series of fractured phone conversations, he uses notation in IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) in order to collect fragments of their pronunciation.

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Telephone interviewer: Voicu Radescu; Camera: Marius Iacob; Sound: Adi Tudose; Sound mix: Slobodan Bajic; Production: Magda Radu, Alexandra Croitoru, Ioana Gheorghiu; Research: Adam Ulbert, Mihaela Vasiliu.

Thanks to Ion Grigorescu, Tudor Bratu, Daniel Popa, and Tony Blokdijk. The film was made possible with the support of Salonul de Proiecte, Bucharest and Mondriaan Fund, Amsterdam.

***Her Production*, single channel video, 2014**

The video consists of an audio track alongside a projection of handwritten subtitles in IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet). The track comprises a collage of various critiques of the artist's own English pronunciations, or 'production', as articulated by her fellow students and her teachers during the 2014 Summer Course of English Phonetics at UCL in London.

Pronunciation analysts: Paul Carley, Jane Setter, Puri Marino Casal, Yoshio Ido, Mariëlle Beringen, Maria Gema Naranjo Moreno, Maria Jesus Terrero Sanches, Sergio Perez, Yoshihito Kamakura, Tim Wharton, and anonymous linguists; Production assistance: Adam Ulbert, Gerard Ortin; Sound mix: Slobodan Bajic.

Location: 2014 Summer Course for English Phonetics, University College London.

Thanks to Joanna Przedlacka, Michael Ashby, and Marike van Harskamp.

The film was made possible with the support of Mondriaan Fund, Amsterdam.

Wer Mae Hao, single channel video, 2015

This film is the result of a series of workshops held at De Zonnebloemschool and Extra City, Antwerp, in which children with different language backgrounds explored the possibilities for an English of the future. In this video, shots of the children telling a story in an English that is constructed from their individual, self-made varieties, are juxtaposed with close-ups of their hands cutting up pages of English dictionaries, and constructing a celebratory puppet that they then dance with in their gymnasium.

Performers: Abdul Bhatti, Aleeza Ghulam, Aliful Islam Bhuyan, Amapola Cayrafourcq, Angelo Ledi Frances, Antonios Daskalopoulos, Diane Mboungou, Ebenezer Gonah, Ebo Sikder, Ivana Nova, Karista Khan, Leon Elvis Rylant, Mara Mircan, Paraschos Daskalopoulos and Lynn Kocken; Camera: Benito Strangio; Sound: Chris Everts; Coaching: Rosa Vandervost; Sound mix: Slobodan Bajic; Props assistance: Roi Alter; Set assistance: Karina Beumer, Charlotte Gyselinck.

Location: Zonnebloemschool Antwerp.

Thanks to ISF Active English Programme.

The film was made possible with the support of Extra City Kunsthall, Antwerp.

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Darling Good Night, single channel video, 2016

The work consists of an audio track superimposed onto a video of a still lake. The accompanying audio track records the stories of a number of people who are waiting for their residence permits in an isolated part of Norway, retelling their ‘linguistic journeys’ to Europe, from Eritrea, Syria, Ethiopia, and Sudan. The lake and mountains shown in the video is the exact view these people could see while waiting at Jølster refugee centre and learning a regional variety of Norwegian.

Interviewees: anonymous residents of Jølster refugee center, Norway;
Camera: Ole Johnny Devik; Audio mix: Slobodan Bajic.
Thanks to Martin Waldmeier, Bernahu Mekonen, and Ingrid Norum.
The film was made possible with the support of Sogn og Fjordane
Kunstmuseum, Før, Norway.

***A Romance in Five Acts and Twenty-one Englishes,
single channel video, 2015***

The work is based upon Bernard Shaw's 1912 play *Pygmalion – A Romance in Five Acts*. Twenty-one translations of the play were collected and re-translated into English in front of a live audience at Kunstraum, London, and later brought together as a book by Onomatopee, Eindhoven. A cast of five native English-speaking actors later staged the second act of the play in its non-native English adaptation. This video registration shows an excerpt of a live staging at De Theaterkamer, Amsterdam in 2015.

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Performers: Mark Bellamy as Henry Higgins, Cézanne Tegelman as Liza Doolittle, Ralph de Rijke as Mr Pickering, Claire King as Mrs Pearce, and Mark Kingsford as Alfred Doolittle; Camera: Jelle van der Does; Sound: Thomas Myrmel; Make-up: Irina Alberti; Set assistance: Nilas Dumstrei.

The work is based on live translations of *Pygmalion* by Mohamad Barakat, Giacomo Goldoni, Otem Zirlin, Maria Eugenia Tirado Rodriguez, Sheida Ghadak, Silvia Krupinská, Motoko Ishibashi, Sandra Buch, Maria Sineva, Yuka Tanaka, Jin Han Lee, Darina Bakalets, Brian Llinares, Mihael Stefanac, Diego Victoria, Mette Kjaergaard Praest, Inci Baker, Pegah Tahmasebi, Ezgi Hazal Aygan, Veronica Szabó, Pei Han, Roman Dogushev, Bodil Jessen-Klingenbergs, and Mical Nelken.

Thanks to Theaterkamer Amsterdam and Gertjan ten Thije.

The work was made possible with the support of Kunstraum London, Onomatopee Eindhoven, KunstWerke Berlin, and Mondriaan Fund, Amsterdam.

PDGN, single channel video, 2016 and text projection (in the foyer)

Script, direction and edit: Nicoline van Harskamp; Camera and grading: Marius Iacob; Sound recording and mix: Slobodan Bajic; First assistant director: Bea de Visser; Set production: Ana Ballasteros; Costumes and props: Luisa Amanda Vargas; Set design: Kike Pozo;

Camera assistance: Mattei Sopterean; Performers: Ariane Barnes, Paula So Man Siu, and Mouna Albakry; Extras: Lola Botello, Maribel Alarcon, Belen Cobos, Lara Lopez, and Esperanza Macias.

The script is based on recorded workshops with Goeun Choi, Stavroulla Gregoriou, Yulu Gao, Yutaka Hishino, Alice Pons, Hashim Gmal, Khalid Jone, Malina Suliman, Teferi Mekonen, Ugo Iheukumere, Salim Shakuwe, Bing Bin, Masaki Komoto, Olivia Reschofsky, Alejandro Navarrete, Ieva Kraule, Afra Suci, Sefer Memisoglu, Igor Sevcuk, Hrafnhildur Helgadóttir, and students of Scenario, Writing for Performance and Audio Visual Media at the University of the Arts, Utrecht.

The language was conceptualised with the help of Elsbeth Brouwer, Laura Rupp, Pablo I. van Suchtelen, Federico Gobbo, Sean Roberts, Robert Phillipson, Jennifer Jenkins, Vincent van Gerven Oei, Rubén Asensio, and Marie-Luise Pitzl. Irish language translations: Burren Translations. The work was produced by Nicoline van Harskamp and BAK, Utrecht. Thanks to Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo (CAAC) Sevilla, Parque Minero de Riotinto, Huelva, and Waterside Contemporary, London.

Van Harskamp's exhibition at Project marks a point of departure in her research and development of a new performance, which will co-produced by Project Arts Centre and partners and presented in Dublin in October 2018. Under the working title *Who is Your Name*, the performance takes place in the waiting area of an institution that collects, inflicts, withdraws, adapts or validates names. It could be a city hall, an immigration office, a credit rating agency or even the headquarters of a social media platform. While waiting for their name to be called, the people depicted recall stories about naming from different times and places.

Following the two plays, *A Romance in Five Acts and Twenty-one Englishes* (2015) and *Some Name Some Noun Simply* (2017), van Harskamp will use various modifications of English as the medium of production, in line with her ongoing inquiry into language change and prediction in relation to the usage of English between non-native speakers.

The performative piece takes as its core subject the proper or personal name, and the tradition of naming processes. Already a subject matter in her earlier works on language prediction, proper names cross boundaries of languages, cultures, religions and nationalities in ways that most other words cannot, and are a factor in language prediction. Names are simultaneously markers of identity and tools of surveillance, and a currency in data-mining industries. Informed by various cultural contexts, the new work will have specific affiliation to the Irish context and story-telling tradition and a re-reading of 1980 Brian Friel's seminal play *Translations*.

BIOGRAPHY

Nicoline van Harskamp is an Amsterdam-based artist whose work considers acts of language and communication in relation to ideology and solidarity through video, installation, and scripted performance.

Recent solo presentations and live events include: *Some Name Some Noun Simply*, live performance at Archive Kabinett Berlin, DE (2017); Veem House for Performance, Amsterdam, NL (2017); Tenderpixel, London UK (2017); *Englishes*, solo exhibition at BAK, Utrecht, NL (2016); solo show at C3A, Cordoba, SP (2016); *A Romance in Five Acts and Twenty-One Englishes* live performance at KunstWerke, Berlin, DE (2015); live event at Extra City, Antwerpen, BE (2015); solo show at Onomatopee, Eindhoven NL (2015); solo exhibition at Kunstraum,

London, UK (2014); *English Forecast*, live performance streamed online for BMW Tate Live Performance Room, London, UK (2013). She participated in Biennials such as the OFF-Biennale, Budapest, HU (2017); Sydney, AU (2014), Eva International, Limerick, IE (2014); Moscow Biennale, RU (2013); Gothenburg, SE (2013); Shanghai, CN (2012); Manifesta 9, Genk, BE (2012) and Bucharest Biennale, RO (2010) among others. Van Harskamp currently works as professor for Performative Art at the University of Fine Arts in Münster.

EVENTS

Artist talk, followed by a first public conversation about naming on Friday 16 February from 7.00–9.00pm at Studio 6 at Temple Bar Gallery + Studios, 5-9 Temple Bar, Dublin 2.

Second public conversation about naming will take place on Wednesday 21 February from 7.30–9.00pm, Studio 6 Temple Bar Gallery + Studios.

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Relatively Speaking tour on Friday 23 February, 1.00pm starting at Temple Bar Gallery + Studios.

Please check our website for further tours and talks.

IMPRESSUM

Curator: Lívia Páldi

Project assistance: Samantha Bok, Ruth McHugh

Exhibition building: Joseph Collins, John Crudden

Paul Doran, Mick Stapleton, Iain Thompson

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project

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Comhairle Cathrach
Bháile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

