

Frances Scholz: Amboy November 15 - December 20

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Opening Reception: Saturday November 15, 4 - 6 PM
Lecture by Chris Kraus, *Amboy: American Artist*, November
25th, 7PM

RELEASE:

Frances Scholz

AMBOY

An artist comes to LA from Cologne. The initial intention was to make a film about Lydia van Vogt, widow of the famous science fiction writer A.E. van Vogt. The intention for the film changes, but fiction remains a foundational context. The artist, following the complex of chance occurrences that is her reality, veers off and becomes entangled in another investigation: a movie about an artist: Amboy.

Amboy is a name shared by a lot of things and an expanding territory of ideas. Amboy is an artist. You haven't heard of him before. He was born in 1965, thirty miles outside Sacramento. He first showed his art in 1992. Lacking a single unified aesthetic or even conceptual identity, he wears multiple, disparate stylistic 'hats' which he has called his "centers of information processing." If this is an artistic strategy, I call it free-market pastiche. There is a terrible, frenetic, multi-tasking, anxious energy coursing through the manic, scattershot, careless range of Amboy's art practice, making him a symptomatic, if not anticipatory, figure exposing the deep psychological undercurrents of this bleak neoliberal, venture capital moment in history. As an actual and allegorical figure, he is scared of silence: music frantically fills the sedatephobic breach. He makes one

wonder how cynicism can be redeployed for a critical function. Fiction is the sign under which his art is born. Amboy is freshly formed and new on the radar; his history is extra-digital and stubbornly unverifiable.

Amboy is also a place—that much is verifiable. You can look it up on Google maps and drive, or fly, there yourself, but bring your own water. Amboy is a ghost town in the Mojave desert. As such, Amboy represents the mutual imbrication of person and place (ghost and ghost town) in a manner that ultimately reflects on ecologies and the inextricability of a human from his or her environment. Amboy is abandoned and broken but still a sight to see, a beauty to behold. The experience and image of Amboy asks, Is the world over? Is this not what the future already looks like? Time is on Amboy's side.

But, for our immediate purposes here in the gallery, Amboy is a horror movie. And before that, it is a trailer, a teaser for a horror movie about Amboy. Yes, not-knowing can be very frightening: What is real and what is made up? Is documentation and fiction a false opposition, and if so, what are facts? If the made-up becomes real, or the real turns out to be fictional, is that a sign of successful agency, superpower, or insanity? Scary shit. It has been said, to look is to doubt. It has also been said, by the man himself, "I Amboy or I Amgirl, I destroy the self." True to the horror genre, death is a theme throughout. Many die and they are female artists; we wonder why and what this portends, or exposes. A range of explanations surely contains science fictional possibilities and conspiracy theories. If, beyond narrative concerns of plot and character, filmic death is always metaphoric, then what *really* is ending—and what new beginnings (because a living consciousness knows no absolute endings) would we hope for?

- Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer

Frances Scholz (b 1962) lives and works in Cologne, Germany. She is represented by Sprüth Magers gallery.

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