

Nora Turato explained away

22 February – 19 May 2019

**KUNSTMUSEUM
LIECHTENSTEIN**

Introduction

Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein is presenting the first comprehensive museum exhibition of the Amsterdam-based artist Nora Turato (born 1991, Zagreb, Croatia).

Every day, Turato uses her smartphone to explore the text hysteria that is circulating online. Fast-paced, nonstop, breaking news in adverts, in the press, literature, film, music and social media. Honing in on specific content, she translates this news into her performance scripts. She processes meaning, sound and the stylistic devices peculiar to the particular medium, rewriting the appropriated passages to create powerful narratives. On this basis, she creates artist's books, installations, murals, videos, audio works and spoken-word performances.

The contents range from text on food packaging that speaks directly to the consumer, to scientific studies, film dialogues and excerpts from website comments. She negotiates social roles and our relationships to consumer goods, political and cultural opinions. It requires some irony, Turato explains, when capitalism treats Zen aphorisms in the same way as the yoghurt-promoting Kardashians.

The exhibition *Nora Turato. explained away* includes four installations and two video rooms. All the works are site-specific and, with one exception, were created in connection with Turato's current *pool#3* texts. *pool#1* (2016–2017), *pool#2* (2017–2018) and *pool#3* (2018–2019) are from Turato's text archives that she uses as sources for her works. After a volume has been published as an artist's book, it is both an archive and documentation. The installations consist of sculptural objects suggestive of a public or private communication space. For her murals, the artist had a special typeface created. The style of the typeface is derived from the process of editing scripts for the performances: Turato edits the text again, adjusting the tone and timbre to internalise the texts' final forms for the performances. By turning her handwriting into a typeface, she has systematised a personal means of expression.

All the works in the show originate in the virtual world and play with possibilities of representation in art. However, in translating her works Turato refuses to make commodified objects. Much remains ephemeral, as does the processed handwriting that becomes a mural –

recalling one of the oldest methods of human communication.

Nora Turato. explained away is the seventh exhibition in a series showcasing outstanding young artists. Works from Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein's collection are integrated into the presentation.

The exhibition, conceived in collaboration with Nora Turato, is a production of Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, curated by Fabian Flückiger. A monographic publication and an artist's edition will accompany the show.

Nora Turato studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam and at the Werkplaats Typografie in Arnheim. She was a resident at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam. Her performances have been presented at institutions internationally, including Bielefelder Kunstverein; Museum Serralves, Porto; Manifesta, Palermo; Kunsthalle Wien; Kölnischer Kunstverein; KW Institute for Contemporary Art Berlin; Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève and LambdaLambdaLambda, Pristina.

Room I

In 1926, the Viennese architect Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky (1897–2000) created the Frankfurt Kitchen, the forerunner of fitted kitchens designed to rationalise kitchen work. The focus was on minimising distances and enabling efficient workflows. The kitchen centralised a lot of housework and formed a self-enclosed workspace. There were many transitional designs between the Frankfurt Kitchen and the open kitchen of the 1990s. These architectural transformations reflect an opening of society and a changing understanding of housework and family. The combination of living room and kitchen enabled a different kind of interaction between housework and social life. With **it's a good thing he didn't click (3)** Turato has created a sculpture that is evocative of both a middle-class open kitchen and a Minimal art sculpture of the 1960s. The sculpture's execution, however, frustrates both these references. Important functional elements, such as an oven, are nowhere to be seen. Instead, a smartphone charging station is recessed into the worktop, forging a physical link between the visitors and the sculpture and – during the performances – between the artist and the sculpture. The vivid, performative element of the title comments on an action (or rather, a non-action), by a male protagonist that can be viewed in the context of social media, or as contemporary housework using a smartphone. The murals give rise to further textual sequences. The title **your screen is bright and its sharp, and while there may be slightly better screens out there, you'd only be able to tell by holding the two phones side-by-side (2)** questions the minimal technological advances from one smartphone model to the next and the latest selling-points.

Works from Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein's collection, accompanied by text fragments on the walls that add a two-dimensional visual language to the exhibition, allow us to construct new narratives.

Works from the collection

Leiko Ikemura studied literature in Osaka and Seville; her work comprises paintings, drawings and sculptures. She creates her own cosmologies and fabulous creatures, landscapes and figures are depicted in harmonious coexistence or almost total fusion: her imagery is highly literary. The untitled watercolours **(5)** chosen by Turato for this show depict simplified faces that nevertheless display some forms of expression. Nonverbal communication, by means of gestures, facial expressions and voice is a major focus in Turato's work; here it is recontextualised by another artist's position.

* Hail Mary, full of wrinkles
the wooden spoon and all-purpose cleaner are with thee
blessed art thou in thy kitchen
in thy little workplace
blessed is the fruit of thy belly, if thou art married
dutiful, obedient Mary, bake for us / now and for all time
Amen

Room II

The second room is divided into a projection space and an exhibition space with a wooden table and two works from the collection. The video **i don't need to make sense, i just need to let it go (6)** is the only work derived from the collection of texts *pool#2*. It harks back to a completed performance and, not being part of the current *pool#3*, represents a look back to the recent past. The text projections echo the speed of Turato's speech, but at times the words are shown so quickly as to be incomprehensible. Coming so thick and fast that they become indistinct, these words convey meanings that can only be 'skimmed'. The stylistic devices of the voice add emotion to the text. Spoken and written language meld into one, but each conveys very different additional information. The projection and the audio are already interpretations of the text and each medium's inherent characteristics come to the fore.

A table is a place of production, consumption and representation. The same structure can fulfil either a public or private purpose. It is an object for coming together, for negotiations and celebrations, a place for making things, for intellectual endeavour or for performing everyday tasks. For Turato, the table **too rare to dislike (12)** serves as a display for her performances. In her absence, it offers the potential for communication, disposal and acquisition. It is a place for circulating language and objects.

Works from the collection

Anne Marie Jehle occupied herself with everyday aspects, social roles and female identity. The wall work **perfect (10)** consists of this word written in wool, a tea towel and window shutters with a prayer on them,* a wedding ring on a kind of peeler, and knitted underwear on a clothes hanger. This ensemble presents an idealised, ironic image of women and the social role assigned to them in a patriarchal, religious community. Turato also sometimes makes explicit reference to social roles in her work. For example, in the text fragments on the wall a play on words spotlights the inadequacy of language when discussing sexuality.

Regina Marxer trained in graphic design before going on to study painting and sculpture. Her focus is on language and images, repetition and variation. Two of her small paintings are featured in the exhibition: *Katze [Cat] (7)*

and *Kuh* [Cow] (**21**). The composition of the two animals' bodies is very similar; only few characteristics define the cat as a cat and the cow as a cow. The depictions of the extremities, the head, legs and tail, incorporate painstaking observations that are translated into a simplified gesture: what minimal expression and content are required to ensure that the result is still identified as the intended animal? And what indications are required to identify the denoted object?

Room III

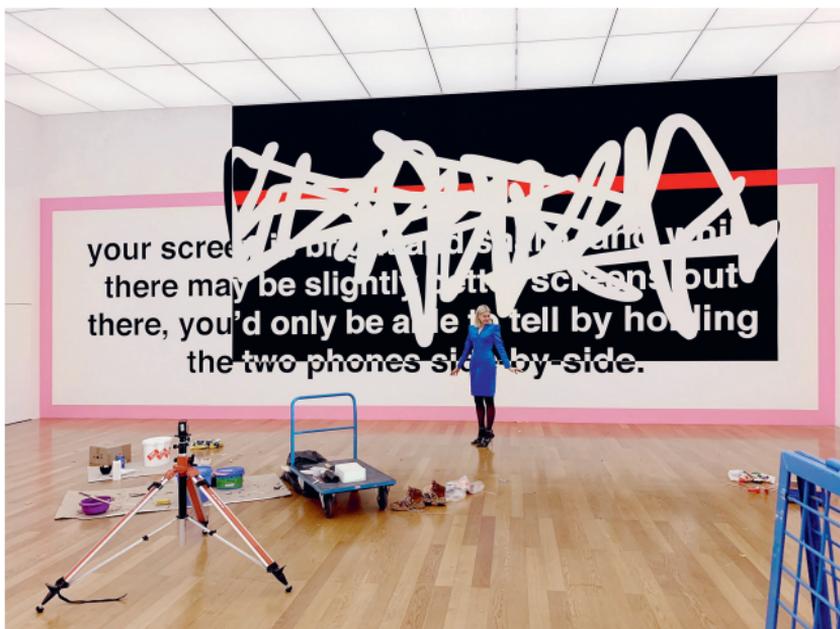
Political decisions and stances are often manifested in public space by architecture. Architectural historian and theorist Douglas Spencer describes in *The Architecture of Neoliberalism: How Contemporary Architecture Became an Instrument of Control and Compliance* (2016) the forms and effects of neoliberal architecture. With privatisation, social facilities and public space are weakened and low-income populations are pushed back. **someone who was in two minds about things, perhaps (18)** is a reconstruction of a bus shelter. On one hand, the space-saving structure suggests that public land is expensive, commuter flows can circulate more efficiently and that there are more options for positioning commercial facilities such as food and retail stands. On the other hand, this structure for leaning on offers no rest for the physically challenged, the elderly or homeless. Turato uses this 'cruel' architecture as a sculpture and a setting for her performances. The fragments of sentences in the murals suggest both intellectual and geographical flexibility is required to satisfy professional or private demands. The mural **im proud to be the eerie one / to get anywhere you had to go everywhere (13)** is from *BoJack Horseman* (2014), the first adult animated series on Netflix. The dialogue revolves around a play on the homonym (a word with different meanings) 'lake'.

Works from the collection

Gina Pane was a performance and body artist. Her working method often involved self-inflicted injuries, to draw attention to political iniquities and the desensitisation of society in the 1970s. Exploring aspects of the body, pain and vulnerability, her aim was to make the audience more aware. **Action Psyché (essai) (15)** is a performance from 1974 in which Pane scratched her eyelids and abdomen. The photographic documentation of the piece puts Turato's practice into a historical context, her handling of the body is diametrically different from the limit-pushing performances of artists of the 1970s such as Marina Abramović and Vito Acconci.

In the 1990s Matthias Groebel developed a complex process of mechanically creating images derived from TV with a programmed airbrush gun. In his untitled paintings **(17)** figures from American TV talk shows are subjected to this automated image reproduction. Groebel modifies the originals so that the typical features of the particular stations are no longer distinguishable. The protagonists

appear in close-up, with captions or inserts indicating the name of the programme, fragments of dialogues or the names of the protagonists. The images are reduced to the main attributes of the visual language. Here Groebel focuses on the visual aesthetics of American television in the 1990s and the translation of mediated realities into painting.



Building up: *Nora Turato. explained away*

– Do you think Lake Erie ever gets jealous of Lake Superior? Or is it, like, proud to be the eerie one?

We've been through this, Todd.

Lakes don't have emotions.

– What about Ricki Lake?

Excerpt from a dialogue in *BoJack Horseman*, Netflix-series

Room IV

In her work Turato combines sociocultural elements with puns and semantics. She harks back to the literary and performative achievements of the 1970s of the American performance artist, poet and critic David Antin (1932–2016). With his ‘talk poems’ Antin introduced a new approach in the North American literary scene. Unlike Turato’s, his performances were not scripted. Rather, he saw poetry as an open process that could only be fully developed in the course of the performances. In the publication *Code of Flag Behavior* (1968) he wrote about his fascination with the strategies of pop art. This affinity to pop art and pop literature is also evident in Turato’s work. Her collected texts are all edited and many of Turato’s texts are in direct speech. This intervention makes the text more immediate, as was the intention of New Journalism. The listener is involved and Turato becomes the protagonist of the lines. However, the listener does not know who is speaking as the original source is not evident. Some of the lines create a sense of déjà vu when we hear elements that we have encountered elsewhere in a similar form, this disrupts the seemingly clear relationship between the speaker and the text. Structures and themes from pop music are also incorporated to a



David Antin, *Sky Poem*, 1988. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2008.M.56) © J. Paul Getty Trust

certain extent. The title of the mural **the world is like a cactus, its impossible to sit down (23)** is two lines from the song *Cactus* (1966) by the chansonnier Jacques Dutronc. Georges Pompidou, then Prime Minister of France, quoted the extremely popular song in the year it was released to comment on a rivalry in the French National Assembly: 'Comme dirait Jacques Dutronc, il y a des cactus.' His comment made headlines. The second sentence **sometimes, id look at him through the fork and pretend he was in jail (24)** evokes the comic element and power of the imagination.

Turato's conceptual approach in appropriating, examining and reinterpreting existing material is reflected in the full title of the exhibition and emphasises the (in) constant production of reality by language:

This was how people disappeared from history, wasn't it? They weren't erased, they were **explained away**.

Works from the collection

Bruno Jakob has been working on the *Invisible Paintings* since 1968. He paints and draws imaginary and real situations with thoughts, touches and energy. His work also includes photographs or painting performances in front of audiences. The titles and details of the work help the viewer tap into Jakob's mental images. The core of his work lies in avoiding visual depiction, preferring to leave matters to the viewer's imagination based on a few clues. In **Untitled (Horse) (22)** Jakob holds up a canvas to a horse. The photograph shows Jakob's method of 'depicting' a literary situation.

Titles conform to the artist's preference.

Exhibition Checklist

All works by Nora Turato were realised for the exhibition at Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, courtesy of the artist and Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz

X

to be truly elegant, one should not be noticed, 2019

steel, wood, foam and fabric

6 parts; 3 panels: 243 × 254 × 102 cm;

3 panels: 163 × 254 × 102 cm

Supported by soundpallet.com (foam) and Ernessa-Austria (fabric)

Room 1

1

a sufficiently dinky arena for my dinky gift, 2019

emulsion paint

variable dimensions

2

your screen is bright and its sharp, and while there may be slightly better screens out there, you'd only be able to tell by holding the two phones side-by-side, 2019

emulsion paint

variable dimensions

3

it's a good thing he didn't click, 2019

chromium-plated wood, stainless steel sink, USB charging station

103 × 372 × 153 cm

4

jitter#1, 2019

emulsion paint

variable dimensions

5

Leiko Ikemura

* 1951 in Tsu, Mie, Japan, lives and works in Berlin and Cologne

Ohne Titel [Untitled], 1996

watercolour on handmade paper

each 52.7 × 42 cm

Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz

Room 2

6

**i don't need to make sense,
i just need to let it go, 2018**

pool#2, b/w video, audio
22'57"

7

Regina Marxer

* 1951 in Vaduz, lives and works in Liechtenstein

Katze [Cat], 2002

Acrylic on canvas

30 × 59.7 cm

Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz

8

libido applied, 2019

emulsion paint
variable dimensions

9

**i wanted to say 'cock' but the word wouldn't really
form in my mind because it was too obscene, and
'penis' always sounded so ridiculous, 2019**

emulsion paint
variable dimensions

10

Anne Marie Jehle

* 1937 in Feldkirch, † 2000 in Vaduz

perfect, n.d.

wall installation: wire, wool, tea towel, wooden shutters,
chalk, wire, coat hanger, wood, wedding ring
variable dimensions

Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz

11

**we should let them express their gratitude now /
we will put pressure on them quietly later, 2019**

wallpaper
550 × 843 cm

12

too rare to dislike, 2019

varnished wood
75 × 350 × 150 cm

Room 3

13

im proud to be the eerie one / to get anywhere you had to go everywhere, 2019

emulsion paint

variable dimensions

14

explained to death, 2019

emulsion paint

variable dimensions

15

Gina Pane

* 1939 in Biarritz, † 1990 in Paris

Action Psyché (essai), 1974 (24.1.1974)

laminated colour photograph

40 × 29.4 cm

Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz

16

we must finish her off, i'm afraid, 2019

emulsion paint

variable dimension

17

Matthias Groebel

* 1958 in Aachen, lives and works in Cologne

Ohne Titel [Untitled], 1992

Acrylic on canvas

95 × 95 cm

permanent loan of the artist / Kunstmuseum
Liechtenstein, Vaduz

18

**someone who was in two minds about things,
perhaps, 2019**

varnished steel, chromium-plated steel, safety glass

263 × 350 × 95 cm

Room 4

19

**has anyone tried unplugging it
and plugging it back in?, 2019**

pool#3, b/w video, audio
22'57"

20

jitter#2, 2019

emulsion paint
variable dimensions

21

Regina Marxer

* 1951 in Vaduz, lives and works in Liechtenstein

Kuh [Cow], 2002

acrylic on canvas
30 × 60.1 cm
Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz

22

Bruno Jakob

* 1954 in Jegenstorf, Switzerland, lives and works
in New York

Untitled (Horse), 2003

Invisible painting: brain on photograph
17.8 × 17.8 cm
Ed. 1/1 + 2 AP
Private collection / Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz

23

**the world is like a cactus,
its impossible to sit down, 2019**

emulsion paint
variable dimensions

24

**sometimes, id look at him through the fork and
pretend he is in jail, 2019**

emulsion paint
variable dimensions

25

**we should allow them to express their gratitude
now, and then quietly press, 2019**

wallpaper
550 × 962 cm

26

did you say something stupid to somebody stupid?,

2019

varnished wood

75 × 350 × 150 cm

bambi's mother, shot.
nemo's mother, eaten
by a barracuda. lilo's
mother, killed in a car
crash. koda's mother in
brother bear, speared.
po's mother in kung fu
panda 2, done in by a
power-crazed peacock.
ariel's mother in the 3rd
little mermaid, crushed
by a pirate ship.
human baby's mother
in ice age, chased by a
saber-toothed tiger over
a waterfall.

THE
MOTHERS
IN MOVIES
EITHER
COME
AS
SERIES

Nora Turato

**the mothers in movies are either gone or useless,
2019**

Lithograph on paper

Sheet: 59.4 × 42 cm

Edition: 50 + 5 AP

Signed, dated and numbered verso

Published by Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz

Price: CHF 290 (unframed), plus CHF 150.– with frame

This edition was made for the exhibition *Nora Turato. explained away*. Turato had a special typeface designed based on her handwriting for the show. The style of the typeface derives from the process of editing her performances to determine word melody and intonation and to internalise the texts for recital. By creating the typeface, Turato had a personal means of expression systematised. Is the artist asking how our use of language changes as automation increases?

Turato often takes an ironic look at social roles in her work. *the mothers in movies are either gone or useless* is an excerpt from a passage that she recites in her performances. The section concerns the loss of dignity of mothers who take care only of their children, but not themselves. The advice given by one mother is, 'You're only really elegant when no one notices you.' The plot goes on with the theory that mothers are either effaced or depicted as useless in Hollywood movies because of male womb envy.

Opening

Thursday, 21 February 2019, 6pm

Performances

Nora Turato. explained away

Thursday, 21 February 2019, 6pm (opening)

Friday, 22 February 2019, 2pm

Saturday, 23 February 2019, 2pm

Sunday, 24 February 2019, 11am

Thursday, 28 March 2019, 6pm

Friday, 29 March 2019, 2pm

Saturday, 30 March 2019, 2pm

Sunday, 31 March 2019, 11am

Thursday, 16 May 2019, 6pm

Friday, 17 May 2019, 2pm

Saturday, 18 May 2019, 2pm

Sunday, 19 May 2019, 11am

Take Away (short guided tour)

Thursday, 28 February 2019, 12.30pm

Thursday, 28 March 2019, 12.30pm

Public guided tours

Thursday, 4 April 2019, 6pm

Side programme

Sunday, 7 April 2019, 11am

Nora Turato. explained away

with Thomas D. Trummer, Director, Kunsthaus Bregenz,
and Fabian Flückiger

In cooperation with Liechtensteinische Kunstgesellschaft

Sunday, 5 May 2019, 11am

Nora Turato. Aspekte des Pop

with Fabian Flückiger

Filmclub im Kunstmuseum

Thursday, 21 March 2019, 6pm

Her

by Spike Jonze, USA, 2013, 126'

Thursday, 9 May 2019, 6pm

That Uncertain Feeling

by Ernst Lubitsch, USA, 1941, 84'

The exhibition *Nora Turato. explained away*
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