

november 12  
6 p.m.

fall 2015

conversations  
at the edge  
experimental media series

## martine syms: the unreliable narrator

2012–15, USA, multiple formats, ca 60 min + discussion

**Martine Syms** is an artist based in Los Angeles. She currently runs *Dominica*, an imprint dedicated to exploring blackness as topic, reference, marker, and audience in visual culture. She has lectured at SXSW, Walker Art Center, REDCAT, ICA London, and MoMA PS1, among other venues. Her artwork has been exhibited and screened widely, including at the New Museum, Studio Museum, White Flag Projects, ICA Philadelphia, and 356 Mission. She received a BFA from SAIC in 2007.

program

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### **Lessons I-XXX**

(Martine Syms, 2014, digital file, 15 min.)

*Lessons* is a series of 30 second spots that use found footage, personal archives, and original footage to compose an extended, incomplete poem about the black radical tradition. Screened in random order.

### **Memory Palace**

(Martine Syms and Kahlil Joseph, 2015, video, 2 min.)

*Memory Palace* is a short film grounded in the personal history of artist Martine Syms. A discovery of a photo album activates memories of physical spaces, which in turn open doors to reminiscences of past family life.

### **My Only Idol Is Reality**

(Martine Syms, 2012, video, 7 min.)

*My Only Idol is Reality* is a video created from an excerpt from Season One of MTV's *The Real World*. The piece uses repetition as a framework for abstraction. Syms re-recorded the original excerpt between tape decks until the image and conversation broke down.

### **Notes on Gesture**

(Martine Syms, 2015, video, 3 min.)

Inspired by a riff on a popular joke "Everybody wanna be a black woman but nobody wanna be a black woman," *Notes on Gesture* is a video comparing

authentic and dramatic gestures. The piece uses the 17th century text *Chirologia: Or the Natural Language of the Hand* as a guide to create an inventory of gestures for performance. The piece alternates between title cards proposing hypothetical situations and short, looping clips that respond. The actor uses her body to quote famous, infamous, and unknown women. She repeats and interprets each movement several times, switching from a physical vernacular to acting techniques like blocking and cheating.

### **A Pilot For A Show About Nowhere**

(Martine Syms, 2015, video, 25 min.)

*A Pilot For A Show About Nowhere* is a two-channel video that examines the politics of television viewership, incorporating footage from a number of sources to create a plurivocal narrative. It is a sitcom pilot, but does not resemble a conventional episode. Black sitcoms are central in their potential to undermine television conventions and spark unpredictable and radical impulses, but also in their role in the erasure of the struggles and realities of poor Black populations. Filmed reenactments of the artist's life ground *A Pilot For A Show About Nowhere* in her experience, and a "She Mad" title card suggests a complete narrative.

upcoming

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November 19 at 6 p.m.  
Claudia Hart: Simulisms