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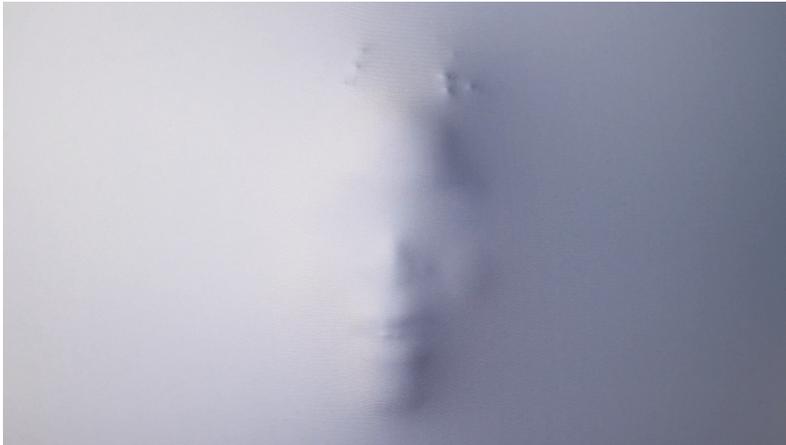
Songs For Presidents presents

Relief Work

**Brent Garbowski, Joseph Mault, Sarah Mendelsohn,
and Fred Schmidt-Arenales**

February 26 – April 3, 2016

Opening Friday, February 26, 7 to 10pm



Video still featuring Diamond Stingily, *She discharges the unspeakable things on behalf of the city*, 2016, Sarah Mendelsohn and Fred Schmidt-Arenales

Queens, New York, February 7, 2016 – Songs For Presidents is pleased to announce *Relief Work*, an exhibition of new work by four artists working in collaborative pairs: Brent Garbowski and Joseph Mault, and Sarah Mendelsohn and Fred Schmidt-Arenales. The artworks included are based in language and complicated through collaborative processes, mistranslation, and linguistic maneuvers. *Relief Work* acknowledges the different forms collaborations can take, and how methods of working with another are reflected in artistic production and completed object.

Brent Garbowski and **Joseph Mault** have been collaborating since 2009, working in sculpture, photography, and video. In their collaboration, two artists with individual interests in the aesthetics and consequences of transgression found themselves held accountable to the other. Their process builds upon individual contributions that accumulate to ultimately arrive at an object with a forgotten origin and layers of personal meaning not necessarily shared by both artists. While their practice is motivated by the need to confront repressive structures of contemporary society, what results are objects and images that fall in a space between humor, sadness, and romantic tragedy.

For the exhibition, Mault and Garbowski have produced two new video works and a sculpture. The videos have a cinematic quality not seen in earlier works; in *the cooler*, both artists sleep in tangled sheets on either side of an upright king-sized mattress. In *officer obie*, the pair is seen through the windshield of a Chevy Silverado, driving while they sing the same song to themselves. Their sculpture, *footprints* depicts to-scale sidewalk tiles with writing scrawled in the wet cement, the text appropriated and manipulated from Mary Stevenson's poem of the same title.

Sarah Mendelsohn and **Fred Schmidt-Arenales** collaborate in writing, performance, video, and audio to explore the roles of language and narrative in contemporary life. Addressing the tremendous

role that fiction plays in the construction of relationships and events, their work asks: how are political narratives constructed? By whom or what, and how do they break down? They often use radio to make their work accessible across disparate social contexts, combining documentary and performance strategies. In 2015, they launched *Reconnaissance*, a podcast project investigating intersections between political realities and fictions.

Their new video installation, *She discharges the unspeakable things on behalf of the city*, is an allegory of resistance and longing. Drawing from Anne Carson's essay "The Gender of Sound," the video weaves together orbiting perspectives: the voices of a filmmaker and her subject, a political demonstration and a subsequent arrest. Both sound and image are shrouded and intimate details are relayed as if from behind a wall.

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