SUSPENDED ANIMATION:
MOVING IMAGES IN PRINT

APRIL 7 – JUNE 4

“Animation is the hard copy of memory, accessed while it is being rendered by hand, or by hands assisted by machine. In general terms, animation is memory that moves and evolves. People tend to think of animation as evidence of imagination.”

- Video/Intermedia/Animation (2005) by Tom Sherman

Artists featured: Jerstin Crosby, Meghan Allynn Johnson, William Kentridge, Laleh Khorramian, Kakyoung Lee, Nicola López, Jennifer Nuss, Kiki Smith & Steven Subotnick

Curated by Lotte Marie Allen

INTERNATIONAL PRINT CENTER NEW YORK
Animations jump-start our imaginations, act as stand-ins for memories and connect seemingly disparate subjects; they offer a makeshift, stream-of-consciousness explanation to mysterious constructions. In *Suspended Animation: Moving Images in Print*, collective memories – in the form of animated prints, collages, installations and drawings – flicker on darkened walls, adjacent to their printed source material. The latter, acting transformatively as remembrances of the films, sources of inspiration and distinct artworks, exist temporally in a moment of suspension—just barely breathing yet full of potential. Collectively, these prints dance, fly, shout, whisper, quiver, shake, peel and scratch their way onto the silver screen. Starting as sheets of paper or mylar with printed marks, hand drawn lines, collage elements, the prints morph and connect, forming narratives of circus performers and the book of the devil, dreamlike helicopter voyages and the downfall of apartheid; and this diverse fictional, historical, and surreal content is all connected through time-based media.

Through hand-printed and manually-drawn techniques, digital manipulation, collage and installation, *Suspended Animation* features projects that experiment with sound, time, state, scale and color. The featured artists push the boundaries of printmaking and animation, finding unity somewhere in between. These works function organically, where sketches give rise to animation, and film stills become finished, singular artworks; where technique guides the connections between animation, printmaking and memory. Artists dance with the art of mechanical reproduction, play games with visuals, and experiment with proliferation, erasure and sequential imagery.
Some artists explore the serial nature of printmaking and animation by placing successive variant states of prints on filmic timelines. Kiki Smith’s (American, born 1954) animation, Being (2016), features a woman breathing, alongside two color lithographs used in the making of the animation. Each exhibited print is a variant color state of the same image, two of thirteen states used in making the animation. Kakyong Lee (South Korean, born 1975) creates a film out of 342 etchings depicting the artist dancing to Natacha Diel’s experimental sound design in Dance, Dance, Dance (2011). Each image is scratched with a needle into a sheet of Plexiglas, printed, filmed; continuously scratched and filmed over and over. Jerstin Crosby’s (American, born 1979) Silkscreen Tests uses small silkscreen frames to create his animation; frames hang next to his animation in varied states and colors, underscoring the scale and scope of printing in the making of an animated artwork. Silkscreen Tests began by using found or appropriated videos such as dish soap commercials and later on used original film materials, such as his dog filmed through a paper-weight.

Jennifer Nuss, Nicola López and Laleh Khorramian explore the destruction, creation, and continual movement of motifs and characters by placing collaged or digitally-manipulated, printed cut-outs on static or moving backgrounds. The prints themselves perform in each film, as both characters and backgrounds. Jennifer Nuss (American, born 1969) creates woodcut and laser-cut printed images with agile and gestural limbs attached by brass fasteners. Her protagonist, a circus performer encounters mythical sea creatures that undulate, joltingly and hastily. Nicola López (American, born 1975) embraces the experimental nature of printmaking and film, building up and breaking down her Tower of Babel with urban dystopias and architectural forms created from collaged silkscreen, blue tape and monotype cut-outs. In Chopperlady, Laleh Khorramian (Iranian, born 1974) brings multiple dimensions and worlds together with her abstract, fantastical monotype-prints and animations, using pieces of monotypes to construct complex, dreamlike visual landscapes.

Other projects address literary, political and theatrical subjects, exploring narratives about society and humankind. Meghan Allyn Johnson, William Kentridge and Steven Subotnick each use literary or historical narratives in their works. William Kentridge (South African, born 1955) takes a series of narrative prints as inspiration for his hand-drawn and photo-collaged film animation Ubu Tells the Truth (1997). The white-line creature that appears in the works is based on a figure in Alfred Jarry’s late nineteenth-century play, Ubu Roi, which here becomes a stand-in for South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Meghan Allyn Johnson’s (American, 1985) Broadcast references telecasts of the pioneering moon landing of 1969. Her prints were largely destroyed in the making of the film, and she uses the scraps in her finished print-collages. Finally, coming
from the world of experimental animation, **Steven Subotnick** (American, born 1956) uses a variety of materials from etchings to collographs. *Devil's Book* (1994) whispers quietly on a pedestal in the space; acting as "hell as a physical object - the devil's ledger book—with each entry a damned soul." It is created with gestural abstractions, etchings, collages and photographs, and is inspired by Isaac Peretz’s short story *Neilah in Gehenna*.

Each static print acts as a shadow, skeleton or catalyst for the moving images, acting as a palimpsest of stop-motion movement. Cruelty and isolation, loss and creation, play and wonder, fear and death speak to one another—the printed images and animations together offering means for viewing and making sense of the world. *Suspended Animation: Moving Images in Print* communicates varied personal and political narratives through whimsy, proliferation and repetition, through lively reconstruction and experimentation, where mixtures of sound and image are strung together on fragile projections and screens. And while the works in this exhibition of course offer a perspective on the practice and history of animation and printmaking, they act, foremost, as spaces for our memories, and kindling for our imaginations.

— Lotté Marie Allen, April 2016

**This exhibition was made possible** in part by financial assistance from the Ruth Landes Memorial Research Fund, a program of The Reed Foundation. A grant from the PECO Foundation supports IPCNY’s Exhibitions Program this season. Support for the organization’s activities and programming comes from the Areté Foundation, Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, the Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Deborah Loeb Brice Foundation, Gladys Kriible Delmas Foundation, the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, The Greenwich Collection Ltd., The Jockey Hollow Foundation, the New York Community Trust, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, the Porter Family Charitable Foundation, Sweatt Foundation, Thompson Family Foundation, and numerous generous individuals.