

## Natalie Czech

### My Vocabulary Did This To Me

05/22 – 06/27/2015

Natalie Czech's conceptual photography literally "curates" existing images and texts, placing them in a dialogue with each other. The simultaneous acts of "reading" and "viewing" reveal the complexity of interpreting the meaning of what one believes "to see or understand". In the current show, My Vocabulary Did This To Me, the translation of visual information into written language is at the center of her new series Critic's Bouquet, to [icon] and Poems by Repetition.

In fall of 2015, works of the Poems by Repetition series will be on view in the exhibition "New Photography" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Natalie Czech's artworks are represented in institutional collections including the Pinakothek der Moderne Munich, the Fotomuseum Winterthur and the MoMA New York, and have been presented to an international audience in her solo shows at the Palais de Tokyo Paris (2014), Kunstverein Hamburg, Kunstverein Braunschweig (both 2013) and Ludlow 38 New York (2012).

The new works of Poems by Repetition are a continuation of the series she began with in 2013 and now also subtly play with the interpretation of icons, symbols, slogans and existing poems of the 21st and 20th century, which are characterized by the stylistic principle of repetition. On packages and product specifications of electronic goods, album covers and advertising articles, Natalie Czech "finds" poems by Vsevolod Nekrasov, Charles Bernstein or Tom Raworth and makes them "readable" through markings. The methods of photographic reproduction employed by Natalie Czech resemble the rhetorical repetitions used by the poets. Czech translates the specific type of repetition of the respective poem into a number of individual photographs comprising the work. She photographs the source images several times, either with altered details, exposure times or format sizes. The poems made visible by the markings not only relate to the surrounding original text and the product itself, they also enter into a playful, associative dialogue with the originally depicted symbols, icons, and slogans, and their supposed meaning.



A poem by repetition by Cid Corman, 2015  
2 parts, archival pigment prints  
89×59,4 cm, 81×54 cm  
(total dimension: 89×113,4 cm)

Amidst the Poems by Repetition, Natalie Czech positions works of her new series to [icon] as a sort of punctuation. Subtly adapting aspects of Pop Art and Conceptual Art, to [icon] plays tongue-in-cheek with the "iconic turn" of our society and the complex nature of meaning. Her photographs reveal that the meaning of an icon is established through actions in the real world and thus through a transfer from the noun "icon" to the verb "to [icon]". The markings visualize new contexts in the existing image material. However, in the to [icon] series it is not a second text that Natalie Czech finds, but a "second image" rendered visible and readable by adding a colored, artificial resin form to the photograph. These embedded images show icons used in various computer programs, on user interfaces or websites to visualize specific applications. The meaning of one and the same icon can vary depending on the context. For example, the work "Paperdraft" (2015) depicts a tuxedo shirt. "Retracing" the contours of the collar, the button border and the folded sleeve marks the image of a page with a folded corner. This icon means "Draft" in the email program Mail IOS 8.1.3 for the iPhone, "Blank Page" in Microsoft Word 14.0, "Preview" for the Epson Scanner 3.9.2, "Artboard" in Illustrator CS 5 and "New" on the user interface of Windows XP. In this sense, Natalie Czech not only finds an "image in the image" but at the same time a "text in the image". In the form of a label, Natalie Czech adapts and expands this text as a poetically playful sequence: A Draft / A Blank Page / A Preview / An Artboard / or just / New. In the moment it is read, it also becomes a description

of the tuxedo shirt that itself can be interpreted as a symbol of a dress code defined or prescribed by the wearer.



Paperdraft, 2015 (from to [icon])  
resin form glued on archival pigment print  
116,6×81 cm

The new series, Critic's Bouquet, combines two different forms of "writing": an exhibition review and the "language of flowers". "The language of flowers" originated in the Victorian age of the 19th century, when lexicons existed that defined a meaning for each flower and could be used by the addressee to decipher a message. Both the order and the state of the bouquet had an influence on the final meaning.

Each photograph of the Critic's Bouquets is based on an extremely elaborate work process. Czech asked various authors to write a 400-word review of an artist or exhibition of their choice. In a next step, the authors had to interpret and reduce their texts to a number of available words based on an index of the meaning of individual flowers. The flowers were then selected according to the mini-

mized "review" and made to a bouquet in the exact sequence of the index. The motifs of the photographs show the moment the bouquet was presented, with the playful gesture of "Take that!". Each flower is marked with the index number of the respective type of flower. A label indicates both the addressee and the meaning of the index number, so that the viewer can interpret the review using the index. The Critic's Bouquet series presents a succinct interplay of perspectives, in which the artist, the critic and the viewer permanently switch roles. The critics determine the visual order of the bouquets with the sequence of their keywords. Natalie Czech "stages the image" and is simultaneously the "editor" of the reviews, like in a magazine. The viewer "sees" the review as a visual image, "reads" the index of the individual words, interprets the meaning and thus becomes the "author" of the actual review. In the transition from the text of the written review to the visual chain of meaning in the form of a bouquet of flowers, Natalie Czech works "formulate" an open and playful poetic language and at the same time "show" a succinct analysis of language and meaning.



A Critic's Bouquet by Hili Perlson for Berlinde de Bruyckere, 2015  
2 parts, archival pigment print  
107×79,4 cm



A Critic's Bouquet by Peter Scott for Fischli & Weiss, 2015  
 2 parts, archival pigment print  
 107×79,4 cm

Biographical notice:

Institutional Collections (selection):

Museum of Modern Art, New York, US  
 Pinakothek der Moderne München, DE  
 Bundeskunstsammlung, DE  
 Fotomuseum Winterthur, CH  
 Rubell Family Collection, Miami, US

Solo Exhibitions (selection):

2014  
 Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR  
 2013  
 Kunstverein Hamburg, DE  
 Kunstverein Braunschweig, DE  
 2012  
 Naussaischer Kunstverein Wiesbaden, DE  
 Ludlow 38, New York, US  
 2011  
 Kunstverein Langenhagen, DE  
 2008  
 Kunstverein Bonn, DE



A Critic's Bouquet by Vanessa Desclaux  
for Marc Camille Chaimowicz, 2015  
 2 parts, archival pigment print  
 107×79,4 cm

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A Critic's Bouquet by Rachel Valinsky for Camille Henrot, 2015  
 2 parts, archival pigment print  
 107×79,4 cm