



Aneta Grzeszykowska

November 29 - December 30, 2011

The work of Aneta Grzeszykowska explores the complicated relationship between personal identity and bodily existence in contemporary society. Her Front Room exhibition centers on her 2008 film, *Headache*, one in an ongoing series of the artist's films presenting fragmented and whole nude female bodies engaged in movements and actions against a stark black background. The sinister music of renowned composer Krzysztof Penderecki (Polish, b. 1933)—familiar to American audiences from its inclusion in renowned horror films such as *The Exorcist* (1972) and *The Shining* (1980)—exaggerates the disturbingly aggressive interaction between disembodied limbs and a woman's head and face. The severed limbs are hardly gruesome or gory; rather, they possess a strangely elegant presence as a result of the precision, inventiveness, and imagination of Grzeszykowska's choreography. At times, *Headache*'s scenes achieve an oddly humorous or cartoonish sensibility, as hands and feet disconnected from the body continue to move and function in an otherwise normal manner. Yet the abuse of the woman's head by what one assumes to be her own hands and feet evokes the work's title, both in the literal understanding of the word "headache"—a sensorial pain experienced in one's head—and its figurative meaning connoting a situation, phenomenon, or person that has become a source of frustration or angst. Grzeszykowska's film thus suggests how one's own body might variously be responsible for physical, psychological, and emotional pain.

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Aneta Grzeszykowska was born in 1974 in Warsaw, Poland, where she continues to live and work. She has been featured in solo and two-person exhibitions at the Heidelberger Kunstverein, Heidelberg, Germany (2010); Camera Austria, Graz, Austria (2008); and Art Statements, Art Basel, Basel, Switzerland (2007). Grzeszykowska's work has been presented in such group exhibitions as *Beg Borrow and Steel* at the Rubell Family Collection/ Contemporary Arts Foundation, Miami (2009); *Reality Check* at the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark; and *The Martian Museum of Terrestrial Art* at the Barbican Art Gallery, London (both 2008).

Grzeszykowska's Front Room presentation at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis is her first solo exhibition in an American museum. *Aneta Grzeszykowska* is curated by Dominic Molon, Chief Curator, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis.

The choreography was inspired by the music of Krzysztof Penderecki.

Fragments of the following compositions were used:

Anaklasis (1959)

Fonogrammi (1973)

Polymorphia (1961)

String quartet No. 1 (1960)

Symphony I: Dynamis I - Arche I (1973)

Dancers:

Aleksandra Lemm

Weronika Pelczynska

Marzena Roguska

Anita Wach

Cooperation: Jan Smaga

Image: Aneta Grzeszykowska, *Headache*, 2008 (video still). High-definition video, 11 minutes 37 seconds. Courtesy of the artist and Raster Gallery, Warsaw.

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