**The Anagrammatic Model: The Body, in Pieces.**

In “The Anagrammatic Model: The Body, in Pieces”, artist Sadie Murdoch will discuss the correlation between the form of the anagram and the photographic image in relation to her recent projects.  Murdoch’s work addresses the way in which 20th Century Modernist photography frames and presents the gendered body; her drawings and photographs constitute an investigation into the way in which photographic archives can be ‘inhabited’, through forms of translation which are digital, material and spatial. She will present a selection of work, including images from her solo exhibition *SSS-MM*, at the Museum Haus Konstruktiv in Zürich (2016), and her publication, *Omnipulsepunslide*, a project with Artphilein Editions (ISBN 978-88-940843-2-0).

The title of the presentation is a reference to the book by the late feminist scholar Linda Nochlin, “The Body in Pieces: the Fragment as a Metaphor of Modernity” (1). Nochlin argued that the partial image constitutes a distinctively modern way of viewing the world. The fragment or ‘crop’ in addition to forming part of the notion of the modern, is also a quintessentially photographic device.

Murdoch’s work often features fragments of the unrecognisable and unidentified, signs of the lost and ruined, which are enlarged, cropped, duplicated and re-photographed, together with the artists own body. The artist will argue that the formal devices of early 20th Century photography, Surrealism in particular, function as a series of ‘photo-anagrams’, that disassemble and reconfigure the female form. Claude Cahun’s photographs of Sheila Legge in Trafalgar Square, her face concealed by a hood of rose-petals. Man Ray’s women, cropped, blurred, and solarised to the point of anonymity. Unica Zürn, disarticulated, dismembered and reconfigured by her lover and collaborator Hans Bellmer. In Murdoch’s work this anagrammatic function is re-routed: historical documents and archival material are repurposed, in order to create newsymbolic economies.Through processes of re-staging and interpretation, Murdoch resists and re-routs a photographic gaze which has historically positioned the female subject as image and object.

Murdoch will also discuss the relationship between the photographic negative, the anagram and chronology. As part of her working method, photographic images are often presented alongside their inverted formats. Spectral after-image and primary material record of an event, the photographic negative is ambivalent in its indexical relationship to the visible world and to ideas of the past, present and future. Although a mirror of its positive counterpart, the negative re-arranges the tonal ‘characters’, producing an image that is recognisable but hard to discern, legible but with a reconfigured meaning. In addition to its material function as a precursor of the printed image, the negative also ‘suggests’ a future event; it holds a prescient quality. Photographic reversal operates to re-arrange elements not only of the visible, but also of our sense of time, and therefore history.

Murdoch also asserts that the photographic negative reveals a pivotal function of photography itself. Through reproduction, reversal and duplication, the world becomes unfamiliar, and dislocates our reading of time and place, illusion and ontological fact. Photography ‘shuffles’ the past, present and future, its grammar and syntax opening up an anagrammatic space, which is essential to Murdoch's approach to image making. In her solo exhibition *SSS-MM*, at the Museum Haus Konstruktiv, accompanied by her artist book, *Omnipulsepunslide,* the artist deployed images, objects and texts relating to women involved in the New York and Zürich Dada movement, including Hannah Höch, Emmy Hennings, Sophie Taueber-Arp and Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. In many of her images, the photographic register serves to merge real objects with archival material, so that the corporeal reality of physical bodies becomes integrated with the archival photograph, which in turn becomes ‘animated’, opening up new readings of the way in which we construct, and are constructed by, our encounter with the archival.

(1) Linda Nochlin. The Body in Pieces: The Fragment as a Metaphor of Modernity. Thames and Hudson, 2001