To Become Two

Casco

To Become Two,

Alex Martinis Roe,

Alex Martinis Roe, *Our Future Network*, 2016 (film still). Fragment of the proposition "Productive Refusals," developed in collaboration with Helena Reckitt.

Alex Martinis Roe, *It was an unusual way of doing politics, there were friendships, loves, gossip, tears, flowers…* , 2014 (film still).

Co-Presented With If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution, Amsterdam

Casco — Office for Art, Design and Theory is excited to present *To Become Two*, an exhibition that brings together six films from artist Alex Martinis Roe's long-term research project under the same title. The exhibition project traces the genealogy of "feminist new materialist" and "sexual difference" theories through her engagement with different international feminist communities and their political practices, which include Women's Studies (now Gender Studies) at Utrecht University, Casco's long-term and affectionate partner. *To Become Two* elaborates on a number of historical practices developed by these communities and explores their interconnections across generations and different contexts. The six films are presented in a modular architectural installation that speaks to the project's long

journey — commenced in 2014, *To Become Two* includes workshops, performances, and an artist's book, and will later travel onwards to Bolzano and London.

Australian-born and Berlin-based artist Alex Martinis Roe locates an affirmative politics of difference by performatively tracing a social history of feminist theory and practice. She engages in the making of films, textual documents, and material structures and sites where discursive strategies are practiced in order to show how the significant feminist work of the past is linked to contemporary feminist theories and practices of the present and future. These materials, coupled with the different forms of research and storytelling that Martinis Roe employs, support the stitching of time and history across varied experimentation and encounters with the specific and situated communities she has worked with as a generative methodology towards intergenerational solidarity. As twentieth-century feminist work is often distinguished by generational waves that demarcate priorities and achievements, Martinis Roe's films and their installation offer alternative stories of affirmative relations between feminists across generations.

Martinis Roe draws from the early political work that engages with "sexual difference" — a theory and practice of relational subjectivity that involves relating to, making space for, and inventing a sexuate culture that begins from differences — and later "feminist new materialist" theory, which takes up similar concepts, forms, and political theories of this differing to extend these ideas by accounting for human and non-human forces and modes of relation, exploring the agency of bodies, of matter, and their entanglement with culture in a convergence between the sciences and humanities. The genealogy that Martinis Roe traces not only demonstrates the generative process of developing a social history, but also shows the potential for establishing and practicing a political theory as a result of doing so, thus emphasizing the connection between theory and activism.

Each film explores the history and organization of a feminist group that emerged in the 1970s, '80s, or '90s—including the *Libreria delle donne di Milano* (Milan Women's Bookstore co-operative) (Italy); *Psychanalyse et Politique* (Psychoanalysis and Politics) (France); Women's Studies (now Gender Studies Programme) at Utrecht University (The Netherlands); a network of those active in the Sydney Filmmakers Co-operative, Feminist Film Workers, and the Department of General Philosophy at Sydney University (Australia); and Duoda — Centro de

investigación de Mujeres (Duoda – Women's Research Centre), and Ca La Dona, Barcelona (Spain). By employing various methods such as participant observation, oral history interviewing, archival research, and collaborative social practices Martinis Roe connects the theories and practices of previous groups to a younger generation of women through reenactments, storytelling, consecutive translations, and the presentation of archival material. Her work with this younger generation later resulted in the development of twenty propositions for feminist collective practices, which forms the subject of the final film *Our Future Network* (2016).

The architectural installations that support the viewing of the films, designed with Fotini Lazaridou-Hatzigoga, allow for multiple encounters and ways of viewing the exhibition. Drawing from the interior spaces and material-discursive settings created by these early feminist collectives, these structures emphasize how both material space and social formats inform lived and embodied subjectivity and political practice.

More About The Films Within To Become Two

The six films and their architectural installations provide a deeper understanding of these feminist theory-practices that extend internationally and across time. *To Become Two* includes the film *Their desire rang through the halls and into the tower* (2014–16), commissioned by Casco and in collaboration with the Graduate Gender Programme of Utrecht University, it centers around the interconnected histories of the first-known female university student in Europe, Anna Maria van Schurman (b. 1607), and the development of the Women's and then Gender Studies Research School at Utrecht University. *A story from Circolo della rosa* (2014) is a filmic letter exploring the relationship and social-symbolic practice of *affidamento* (entrustment) between two experimental historians of the Milan Women's Bookstore co-operative who worked together on feminist pedagogical experiments in the late 1980s and who entrusted Martinis Roe to narrate their story. Event and document meet in *It was an unusual way of doing politics, there were friendships, loves, gossip, tears, flowers…* (2014), a two-channel film that presents a choreographic reenactment of a Psychoanalyse et Politique meeting and location shots of the site where 300 women from different European women's groups met at La Tranche sur Mer, France in 1972, to work to distinguish European feminist practices from the "imperialism" of North American feminism. *For the joy of being together, they didn't have to agree* (2015–16) features oral history research, stories, and

translation to discover the desire, affirmation, and joy that accompanied feminist practices in Barcelona in the '90s and their relationship to the political practices of Italian sexual difference feminists. Through the interconnected stories of political groups working in Sydney in the '70s and early '80s, Martinis Roe explores how political practices of alliance led to the development of transdisciplinarity and feminist new materialist methodologies in *It was about opening the very notion that there was a particular perspective* (2015–16) (Sydney). Lastly, the film *Our Future Network* (2016), co-commissioned by ar/ge Kunst, Bolzano; Casco — Office for Art, Design and Theory, Utrecht; If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution, Amsterdam; and The Showroom, London, presents twenty propositions for feminist collective practices with an intergenerational group of women, and is derived from the practices and propositions that arose out of a series of workshops, embodied research, and the five earlier films.

Education Program Related To To Become Two

Two courses led by Martinis Roe will take place within the *To Become Two* installation: "Theory in More Formats," taught together with Vasso Belia, with students from the Netherlands Research School for Gender Studies at Utrecht University on joining academic practice and interdisciplinary forms; and "The Practice of Authority," on the practice of shifting agency and giving authority amongst members of a group, with students from the Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam, and KABK — The Royal Academy, The Hague.

Also on view are six film posters, a collaborative project with Chiara Figone founder of Archive Books, Berlin, as an extension of the *Our Future Network* project. The exhibition will also be accompanied by the publication of *To Become Two*, an artist book published by Archive Books (2016).

Exhibition Team In Addition To The Casco Team

Exhibition architecture in collaboration with Fotini Lazaridou-Hatzigoga
Curated by Susan Gibb
Graphic Design within the exhibition: Chiara Figone, Archive Books
Fabrication Assistant: Benjamin Creek
Audio-visual support and hire: Indyvideo, Utrecht
To Become Two is an exhibition project co-commissioned in the Netherlands by Casco — Office for Art, Design and Theory, Utrecht and If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution,

Amsterdam. The accompanying workshops and performances are co-commissioned by the Keir Foundation. Presenting partners include ar/ge kunst, Bolzano, and The Showroom, London. The project was produced with the support of the Graduiertenschule der Universität der Künste Berlin, the Einstein Foundation, Berlin and the Australian Government through its arts funding and advisory body the Australia Council for the Arts, and has been developed during an Anne & Gordon Samstag Scholarship through University of South Australia. The films presented in *To Become Two* have been produced with additional support from Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; ar/ge kunst, Bolzano; BAR Project, Barcelona; Casco — Office for Art, Design and Theory, Utrecht; and If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution, Amsterdam. Additional support for the project's development comes from The Blank Residency, Bergamo; Centre Intermondes, La Rochelle; Cross Art Projects, Sydney; Gender Studies, Utrecht University, Utrecht; and Viafarini-in-Residence, Milan. Our gratitude to members of the Utrecht community who have loaned their chairs for this exhibition, and thanks to the Netherlands Research School for Gender Studies at Utrecht University, the Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam, KABK — The Royal Academy, The Hague, and Savannah Bay, Utrecht.

Date
20 Nov 2016-29 Jan 2017

Special Dates
19 Nov 2016
13:30-14:30: Press preview
15:00-18:00: Opening to the public
15:15: Artist Floor Talk in To Become Two

Sideinfo
Artist Biography
  Alex Martinis Roe's (b. 1982 Melbourne, Australia) current projects focus on feminist genealogies and seek to foster specific and productive relations between different generations as a way of participating in the construction of feminist histories and futures. She is currently a fellow

of the Graduate School for Arts and Sciences, University of the Arts, Berlin. Between 2006—2007 she was a resident at Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne; in 2011 at Seoul Art Space Geumcheon; and from 2009—2015 at Kunsthaus KuLe, Berlin. Recent exhibitions include *Once I wrote the story of her life, because by then I knew it by heart* (2014) (solo), curated by Arnisa Zeqo, Rongwrong, Amsterdam; *Making Room: Spaces of Anticipation* (2014), curated by Emanuele Guidi and Lorenzo Sandoval, ar/ge kunst Galerie Museum, Bolzano; *A story from Circolo della rosa* (2014) (solo), curated by Fiona Geuß, Archive Kabinett, Berlin; *NEW13* (2013), Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne; *Collective Biographies* (solo)

(2012), *Bibliothekswohnung*, Berlin; *non-writing histories* (2012) (solo), Artspace, Sydney; *Genealogies; Frameworks for Exchange* (2011) (solo), Pallas Projects, Dublin; *HaVE A LoOk! Have a Look!* (2010), FormContent, London. Previously Alex Martinis Roe led the inaugural Summer Open Reading Group for Edition V — Appropriation and Dedication (2013) for If I Can't Dance, and participated in *Performance Days* (2014) with the performance *Their desire rang through the halls and into the tower* (2104), which was presented in collaboration with Casco — Office for Art, Design and Theory.

Related Projects
[Their desire rang through the halls and into the tower](#), [Casco's Winter](#)

Themes
[Affect](#)
[Feminism](#)
[Women's History](#)

Presscoverage
[Karen Archey, 'Vrouwelijke Solidariteit', in MetropolisM, 2016](#)

Events, Age Lines,
"Freedom to invent
the self in company"

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