

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hubbard / Birchler: Night Shift

September 23 – November 25, 2017

Opening reception: Saturday, September 23, 6–8 pm

Artist's talk: 7 pm

Lora Reynolds is pleased to be showing *Night Shift* (2006), a single-channel film by Teresa Hubbard / Alexander Birchler—the artists' second presentation at the gallery.

Night Shift comprises four one-sided conversations between Sam—an older police officer—and four rookie cops. Each vignette, about two minutes long, begins with Sam sitting in a parked squad car at night. Crickets chirp. Anonymous passersby wander into a coffee shop. His partner climbs into the driver's seat with two cups of coffee, hands one over, and starts speaking about dreams; Sam listens. After the fourth vignette, the film loops and continues on ad infinitum. What seems to start as a quintessential cop show turns quickly into a somnambulistic meditation about aspirations, desire, and memory.

One young policewoman wonders if she still has dreams anymore or if something important has passed her by. Another male officer speculates what it might be like if you could extend the moment between sleep and wake for as long as you wanted. A third describes a recurring dream that sounds eerily similar to the mundane situation she finds herself in as she recounts it. Are these vignettes meant to be dreams themselves? Is Sam's mind conjuring phantasms who remind him of his own internal struggles at various stages of life? Perhaps Sam's partners are not imagined, but rather *Night Shift* is a portrait of an older man whose tedious evenings blend together after decades on the beat. With every iteration, *Night Shift* reveals itself more and more as a complete construction, not only of language, but of space, with no actual exteriors, only a parade of interiors, filmed entirely inside a soundstage.

Time moves in surprising ways in many of Hubbard / Birchler's films. We are accustomed to movies with a linear chronology—a beginning, middle, and end—and characters who move a plot forward. By instead structuring their narratives around repetition (one cop's monologue is partially repeated in the background of another vignette by someone standing at a pay phone) and infinite loops with no beginning or end, Hubbard and Birchler are questioning the nature of time—a problem that consistently eludes description by scientists, philosophers, and other thinkers. Is time a fundamental part of the universe, or a construct that exists only in our minds? How can we know?

The lack of resolution in the situations Hubbard and Birchler create—like never finding the boundary between the real and the imaginary for Sam and his cohorts—is meant to allow viewers a multiplicity of possible interpretations. The artists refuse to provide a passive viewing experience like those so often found in Hollywood—predetermined in the way of boarding a rollercoaster, looping the loop, and then going on about your day. The rich, subtle, thoroughly considered soundscape of a Hubbard / Birchler film, the details in how each character moves—stirs her coffee, touches his own face—the intoxicatingly beautiful camerawork: all are devices that compel the viewer to sit, watch, and continually reevaluate their expectations and understandings of the piece.

Teresa Hubbard (1965, Ireland) and Alexander Birchler (1962, Switzerland) have been life and work partners since 1990 and are based in Austin and Berlin. They are currently representing Switzerland in the 57th Venice Biennale, with their highly acclaimed presentation of *Flora*. Their three-channel film installation *Giant* (2014) is currently on view at the Blanton Museum of Art (Austin) until October 1, 2017. They have had solo exhibitions at the Aargauer Kunsthau (Switzerland), Ballroom Marfa, Blaffer Art Museum (Houston), Irish Museum of Modern Art (Dublin), Linda Pace Foundation (San Antonio), Modern

Art Museum Fort Worth, Museum für Gegenwartskunst Basel, Pérez Art Museum (Miami), Sammlung Goetz (Munich), and Whitney Museum of American Art (New York). Their extensive exhibition history includes group exhibitions at the Mori Art Museum (Tokyo), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid), Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago), and Tate Liverpool. Hubbard / Birchler's work is held in numerous museum collections including the Blanton Museum of Art (Austin), Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles), Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (Washington DC), Kunsthaus Zürich, Kunstmuseum Basel, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Museum of Fine Arts (Houston), Pinakothek der Moderne (Munich), and Yokohama Museum of Art (Japan).

Night Shift was commissioned by Art 21 Inc. New York.