

Mimosa House

The Baroness

27 May - 17 September 2022

Preview: 26 May 2022



Baroness Von Freytag-Loringhoven (Between ca. 1920 and ca. 1925).

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Mimosa House will present, for the first time in the UK, a group exhibition dedicated to Dada artist, the Baroness **Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven (1874–1927)**. *The Baroness* will feature von Freytag-Loringhoven's rare original artworks and manuscript reproductions of poems, alongside contributions by international contemporary artists and poets including Caspar Heinemann, Zuzanna Janin, Reba Maybury, Sadie Murdoch, Taqralik Partridge, Liv Schulman, Astrid Seme and Arielle Twist.

Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven was “the first American Dada”, “New York’s first punk persona”, “the great aunt of feminist performance art”, and a radical poet and assemblage artist. Her assemblages and costumes included everyday objects: teaspoons, stamps and tomato cans. Her poetry touched on the subjects of gender and sexuality, religion and war, disrupting patriarchal and gender codes, and reclaiming women’s right to pleasure and birth control.

Grotesque, provocative, non-acquiescent, eccentric, anarchic – von Freytag-Loringhoven’s work shares the vocabulary of Dada itself. However by including her own body and very personal motives in her poetical work, the Baroness creates a very distinct interpretation of Dada and anticipates the post-modernist movement.

Born in Germany in 1874 as Else Plötz, the future Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven left home at age 18 to work as an erotic vaudeville artist and an artist's model in Berlin and Munich, before relocating to New York and Paris to pursue her poetical and performative practice. She published her poems in the uncompromising Little Review arts magazine, sparking outrage for their experimental form and provocative subject matter, gaining recognition and admiration from leading figures of high modernism such as Man Ray, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, Peggy Guggenheim, Berenice Abbott and Ernest Hemingway.

Despite its radicality and innovation, the Baroness' work remains unfamiliar to the wider public. *The Baroness* at Mimosa House will present her original works in the UK for the first time, in dialogue with contemporary artists and poets, celebrating her revolutionary vision of gender and feminism.

- A newly commissioned embroidery installation by **Arielle Twist** - a Nehiyaw, Two-Spirit, Trans Woman artist - features poetry that explores, with both rage and tenderness, the parameters of grief, trauma, displacement, and identity.
- The Polish artist **Zuzanna Janin**'s sculptures-collages *Femmage a Maria & Elsa, (for...)* (from 2018 - ongoing), are awarded to the laureats of the Maria Anto & Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven Art Prize, established in Warsaw. Works from the series of *Home Transformed Into Geometric Solids* (2018) use the waste from Janin's family house construction to connect with memories of Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven and her birth town of Swinemünde (Świnoujście) located in today's Poland
- **Reba Maybury**'s video sculpture *A-good-individual* (2019) shows the backs of five different body parts of five different submissive men reading poems in Reba's apartment at different times during August 2019. The poems each submissive reads had been made for Reba on her demand, using the cut up technique, from abuse she received during a right wing media storm about her work as a 'political dominatrix'.
- In her works *H.C.N.* (2021) (shorthand for 'Here Comes Nobody') and *Here Crawls Moon- Out of This Hole* (2022), **Sadie Murdoch** immerses herself in the photographs, poems and manifestoes of Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. The artist's intent is to re-route and re-position the history of the New York and Zurich Dada movement by cutting up and re-assembling poems and manifestos, placing them alongside reconfigurations of photographic archives.

- Inuk artist **Taqalik Partridge**'s *Build My Own Home* (2021) features amautiit (women's parkas) decorated with spoons collected on a visit to Scotland - where her grandparents are from - as a nod to Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven's Dada fashions created from everyday objects. Her use of teaspoons as decoration also speaks to the history of colonial trade and intercultural exchange.
- Austrian artist **Astrid Seme**'s works form an homage to Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven and her manic use of em dashes. In an enlarged form and with a typesetter's manner, Astrid hands her vinyl dashes *Baroness Elsa's em dashes* (2019) over to the curator to link, emphasize, intervene and interrupt the different exhibited works. The purpose of the em (or en) dash is wide-ranging—as an appropriation of silence, as acting dissonance, as interruption, as occupying space.
- French-Argentine artist **Liv Schulman**'s six-episode fiction *Le Gouvernement* (2019) imagines the destiny and work of women, lesbian, queer, trans and non-binary artists who lived in Paris from 1910 – 1980. Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, who moved to Paris in 1926, is one of the artists that were erased from the great Twentieth Century modernist narrative.

The Baroness exhibition is curated by Daria Khan, with support from Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa and Owens Art Gallery, Sackville.

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For press enquiries, please contact sandra@mimosahouse.co.uk

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About Mimosa House:

Mimosa House is an independent, non-profit institution in Holborn, London founded by Daria Khan in 2017. Dedicated to artistic experimentation and collaboration, we support dialogue between intergenerational women and queer artists. Embracing inclusivity and sensitivity, Mimosa House is a safe and empowering space which focuses on the fluidity of identity and recognises the need for change.

Opening hours: Wednesday—Saturday, 12pm—6pm

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About the artists:

Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven (b.1874, Swinemunde, Germany - 1924, Paris, France)

Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, “the Baroness” as she was known, became a living legend in the bohemian enclave of New York City's Greenwich Village in the years before and after World War I. A provocateur and essential catalyst for New York's burgeoning Dada movement, the Baroness obliterated the boundaries of conventional norms of womanhood and femininity and upended notions of what was considered art. Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven received two posthumous retrospectives at Francis M. Naumann Fine Art, NY (2002); and at Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich and Berlin's Literaturhaus, Berlin (2005).

Caspar Heinemann (b. 1994, London, United Kingdom)

Caspar's practice spans sculpture, poetry, essay, drawing, and theatre. Caspar's work is concerned with the politics of land, occultism, folk revivalism, and sexual countercultures. Caspar is interested in the formal qualities of earnestness, brattiness, obliqueness, religiosity, generosity, and rattan furniture. Caspar's solo exhibitions have been held at Cell Project Space, London; Outpost Gallery, Norwich; Almanac, London; and Kevin Space, Vienna. Caspar has a forthcoming solo exhibition with Cabinet, London in 2022. Caspar makes theatre in collaboration with Alex Margo Arden, and his first poetry collection Novelty Theory was published in 2019 by The 87 Press.

Zuzanna Janin (b. 1961, Warsaw, Poland)

Zuzanna creates sculptures, photographic objects, drawings, and video and sound installations. In the years 1980-87, she studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, and she now lives and works in the city. The main theme and the most important point of reference in the works of Zuzanna is the artist herself. The artist draws inspiration from her emotional biography, memories transformed by time, body memory and its relationship to the environment. In this way, she builds “a gradually evolving image of human life and the human condition”. Zuzanna has received scholarships from the Polish Ministry of Culture, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation in New York and the Kultur-Kontakt in Vienna. She was twice nominated to participate in the Venice Art Biennale.

Reba Maybury (b. 1990, Oxford, United Kingdom)

Reba is an artist, writer and political dominatrix sometimes working under the name Mistress Rebecca. Her work explores the tension between her perceived strength as an object of transactional fantasy and how, through the reality of sex work, she turns this power into something tangible. Much of her art practice is physically created by her submissions through her direction as a way to further the complicated imbalances of labour under sex work and attempt to empower her further than the men’s desires, leaving her with more than just a payment from them. Themes of capital, gender, labour, sexuality and transaction are essential themes to her practice.

Sadie Murdoch (b. 1965, Hexham, United Kingdom)

Sadie studied at Chelsea College of Art and Design and Leeds Metropolitan University. She was a student on the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Programme, New York from 2003-2004, and an Abbey Rome Scholar at the British School at Rome in 2002. Sadie’s solo exhibition in 2016, *SSS-MM*, at the Museum Haus Konstruktiv in Zürich, was accompanied by her artist book *Omnipulsepunslide*, published by Arthphilein Editions. She has staged other one-person exhibitions at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds (2007), the Agency, London (2008 and 2011), and the Henry Peacock Gallery and Domobaal, London (2002). Her performance at Belmacz with Abbas Zahedi and Toby Upton, *A Case of Med(dling)tation*, was included in Performance Exchange, in 2021. Sadie is currently lecturer, MFA Fine Art at Goldsmiths College and lives and works in London.

Taqralik Partridge (b. 1975, Montréal/Québec, Canada)

Taqralik is an artist, writer, spoken word poet and curator originally from Kuujuaq, Nunavut. She is the Director of the Nordic Lab at Galerie SAW Gallery in Ottawa. Taqralik’s visual art has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including at Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery (Montreal) and the Biennale of Sydney. She

co-curated *Tunirrusiangit* (2018) at the Art Gallery of Ontario and *Qautamaat | Every day / everyday* at the Art Gallery of Guelph (2020). Her performance work has been featured on CBC Radio One and she has toured with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra under Kent Nagano and with Les Productions Troublemakers. Taqralik's writing focuses on both life in the North and in southern urban centres, as well as the experiences of Inuit people. A collection of her poetry, curved against the hull of a peterhead, was published in 2020.

Astrid Seme (b. 1985, Graz, Austria)

Seme is a graphic designer and runs her own studio in Vienna. She received her M.A. at Werkplaats Typografie (NL) after graduating from the University for Applied Arts Vienna. Rooted within the fields of graphic design and typography her practice also spreads into sound-based works. These projects are focused on dissecting discrepancies in form and content between the written and spoken word. She also co-runs Mark Pezinger Books, a publishing house for artists' books.

Liv Schulman (b.1985, Buenos Aires, Argentina)

Through the constant use of writing in her video works and live performances, Liv's work centres on how language affects individual and social bodies. The written word or a formulated dialog is always the starting point. Producing filmed discourse, she shows the effect that material and immaterial economies have on all of us. Liv studied art practice and art writing at the ENSAPC de Paris-Cergy, the Goldsmiths University of London, and the Lyon Post-Diploma. She is the winner of the 20th Prix Fondation d'entreprise Ricard, awarded on the occasion of the exhibition, curated by Neïl Beloufa in September 2018. Liv now lives and works in Paris.

Arielle Twist (b. Saskatchewan, Canada)

Arielle is a Nehiyaw, Two-Spirit, Trans Woman, who is creating to reclaim and harness ancestral magic and memories. Originally from George Gordon First Nation, Saskatchewan, she is now based out of Halifax, Nova Scotia. She is an author and multidisciplinary artist. She has work published with Them, Canadian Art, The Fiddlehead, PRISM International, This Magazine, and CBC Arts and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and shortlisted in The National Magazine Awards. Her debut collection *Disintegrate/Dissociate* was a finalist for the Publishing Triangle Awards for Trans and Gender Variant Literature and won The Indigenous Voices Award for Published Poetry. It was also a finalist for the Dayne Ogilvie Prize for LGBTQ Emerging Writers.