

Whistle, Minotaure! 2

curated by Francesco Cavaliere & Marcel Türkowsky

April 14 - April 18

Opening/Performance: Wednesday 14. April 2010, 19.00

Performance by **Brandon LaBelle**, 20.00

Glottogenesis by Matthew Vollgraff

Already as an animal, the human being has language. All violent sensations of his body, and the most violent of the violent, the painful ones, and all strong passions of his soul immediately express themselves in cries, in sounds, in wild, unarticulated noises.

»**J. G. von Herder**, Treatise on the Origin of Language (1772)

Whistle, Minotaure! is happy to present the second in a series of events curated by Francesco Cavaliere & Marcel Türkowsky. We are especially pleased to announce **Matthew Vollgraff's first solo exhibition**: In Glottogenesis, Vollgraff will present new works which have been produced specifically for this exhibition.

The nature and origins of the earliest speech and civilization are puzzles which have intrigued people for centuries. Narratives of human origins invariably disclose an inarticulate anxiety about mankind's past, and the dawn of speech is no exception. We argue from an evolutionary perspective that language is one manifestation of a distinctively human cognitive-behavioral complex which appeared with genus Homo and which has been under strong selective pressure, albeit in different ways at different times, throughout the course of human evolution.

To witness the moment when pain causes a reversion to the pre-language of cries and groans is to witness the destruction of language; but conversely, to be present when a person moves up out of that pre-language and projects the facts of sentience into speech is almost to have been permitted to be present at the birth of language itself.

» **Elaine Scarry**, The Body in Pain

Glottogenesis is precisely this 'birth of language' in both the **individual** and the **phylogenetic sense**. Our groping infantile utterances - the babble, murmurs and cries which comprise the beginnings of speech - are the crossroads which herald our continuity with animal being and passage into human being. And this passage is by no means a one-way street. Emotions and passions invariably overwhelm this distinction of species, which from Aristotle to Cicero to Rousseau has been used to set the human soul apart.

The exhibition was created as an exploration of the physics of the human voice, abstracted or even absented from language. Inextricably bound to this is the animal voice which resides on the margins of the human voice, at the extremes of pain and pleasure, infancy and old age. The transition from one to the other takes place in an instant, as an act of mimesis or of translation: **Glottogenesis is a record of this instant in all of its dimensions.**

»Matthew Vollgraff

was born in California, USA in 1987. His work is concerned with issues of language, gesture and animality, drawing its inspiration from theology, anthropology and the history of science. He graduated in Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley in 2010 and now lives between Berlin and New York, where he works as an illustrator and translator.

»Brandon LaBelle

is an artist and writer working with sound and the specifics of location. Through his work with Errant Bodies Press he has co-edited the anthologies "Site of Sound: Of Architecture and the Ear", "Writing Aloud: The Sonics of Language", "Surface Tension: Problematics of Site" and "Radio Territories". He initiated and curated the Beyond Music series and festivals from 1997 - 2002 at Beyond Baroque Literary/Arts Center in Los Angeles, and in 2001 he organized "Social Music", a radio series for Kunstradio ORF, Vienna. Throughout the 90s he played drums in various bands in Los Angeles, notably Farflung and Purse, and worked as idbattery (with l. chasse) producing experimental performances and field recordings. His work has been featured in exhibitions and festivals internationally, including "Sampling Rage" (1999) Podewil Berlin, "Sound as Media" (2000) ICC Tokyo, "Bitstreams" (2001) Whitney Museum New York, "Pleasure of Language" (2002) Netherlands Media Institute Amsterdam, and "Undercover" (2003) Museet for Samtidskunst Roskilde, and his writings appear in various books and journals, including "Experimental Sound and Radio" (MIT), "Soundspace: Architecture for Sound and Vision" (Birkhäuser) and "Reinventing Radio" (Revolver). He presented a solo exhibition at Singuhr galerie in Berlin (2004), and an experimental composition for pirate drummers as part of Virtual Territories, Nantes (2005). His ongoing project to build a library of radio memories, "Phantom Radio", was presented fall 2006 as part of Radio Revolten, Halle Germany and at Casa Vecina, Mexico City in 2008. He is the author of "Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art" (Continuum 2006)



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