

**Dani Gal**

*The Shooting of Officers*

27 August – 10 October, 2009

Opening Wednesday, 26 August, 2009, 5–8pm

The phrase „The Shooting of Officers“ is taken from the book *Fatal Words: Communication Clashes and Aircraft Crashes* (1994) by linguist Steven Cushing. One of Cushing’s fields of research examines misunderstanding in communication due to phonological, syntactical, and semantic polysemy. *Fatal Words* takes a look at misunderstanding in aviation communication and can be read as a manual for the intelligible exchange of information as countless accidents in aviation result from misinterpretation by pilots and air-traffic controllers. „The Shooting of Officers“ is a sample phrase in Cushing’s book that is used to disclose multiple possible interpretations that follow linguistic ambiguity. Dani Gal transforms this phrase into a light sculpture that depicts a multiplicity of understandings by literally illuminating various meanings of the phrase and making the fragility of language and interpretation visible in letters made of glass. Dan Flavin’s laconic description of his neon sculptures with the expression “You see what you get” provides a context in which Gal’s *THE/A/T/E/SHOOTING/DONEBY/OFF/OFFICERS/ARE/SHOT*, 2009, also broach the issue of the self-referentiality of language, its semantic possibilities and limits, its self-containedness and inevitable dependence on external connotations.

Many of Dani Gal’s works negotiate equivocalities in iconic and linguistic signs as well as blank spaces in supposedly linear and complete instances of logical consequence. Through research and interviews, assembling his own archives and combining texts, sound, and images from various sources, Gal forms alternate, polyphonic networks and systems of signification. Questions concerning the representation and mediatization of collective and subjective experience as well as the conveyance of history are raised without providing easy answers.

In addition to the linguistic problems that are analyzed in Cushing’s book, the video *Manual*, 2009, also takes a look at experiments described in handbooks that aim to regulate messages in the flow of information by standardizing forms of communication. The video shows excerpts with titles such as “Educational Films” and „Writing for Television and Radio” that are taken from manuals for creating film scripts and radio and television programs. Media coverage and its commitment to objectivity in the dissemination of information come within reach of productions that aim to entertain and make use of techniques which try to produce unitized viewing experiences precluding misunderstandings as well as alternate readings. Furthermore, the video references John Baldessari’s work *Teaching a Plant the Alphabet*, 1972, in which the artist undertakes the ludicrous attempt of teaching the alphabet to a potted plant. As this work absurdly points to the boundaries of linguistic communication, Gal’s *Manual* shows the questionable attempt to professionalize and unitize communicative media in which language is construed to produce precise systems of exchange between sender and receiver that include producers and consumers likewise.

A series of prints titled *Coupons 1-12*, 2009, finally examine the relationship between technological development and the conditioning of viewing habits. Images from various issues from the 1960s of the German magazine DER SPIEGEL are applied to a background of newsprint. The images show advertisements for tape recorders and compact cameras at the cutting edge of technology at the time. Booming in this decade, these new technological products promised the appropriation and adequate documentation of everyone’s experiences. In composition with these advertisements we find at times perturbing photojournalistic images that quietly reveal our usurping claims to commentary. The transformation of the source material into artistic works also points to the debate over the dichotomy of photography as a medium that is capable of both visual documentation and artistic creation while not incidentally referring to rules within the system of visual language

For further information and images please contact the gallery:

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Works and performances by Dani Gal (\*1975, Jerusalem, lives in Berlin) have been presented et al. at Halle für Kunst, Lüneburg, D (s, 2009), Project Room, Pecci Museum Prato, IT (s, 2009) D, Kunstmuseum Bonn, D (g, 2009), Badischer Kunstverein, Baden, D (g, 2009), Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, D (g, 2009), Smart Project Space, Amsterdam, NL, (p, co with Achim Lengerer, 2008), Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin, D (g, 2008), Lewis Glucksman Gallery, Cork, I (g, 2006) Kunsthau Baselland, Muttenz/ Basel, CH (g, 2006), Kunsthalle Wien, Ursula Blickle Video Lounge, A (g, 2006), Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Wien, A (g, 2006).

(s= solo show, g= group show, p= performance, co= collaboration)

Prices/ awards (selection):

Ars Viva, Kunstpreis Kulturkreis der Deutschen Wirtschaft with exhibitions at the Museum Wiesbaden, D, Kölnischer Kunstverein, D, migros museum für gegenwarts-kunst, Zurich, CH (2009/ 2010).

Dorothea von Stetten art price (2009, nominated)

Künstlerstätte Schloss Bleckede, Lüneburg, D (2009)

Villa Romana Kunstpreis, Florenz, I (2008)

**Additional event:**

Book launch

*Chanting Down Babylon*

Saturday, 29 August 2009, 4pm

Artist talk with Dani Gal, Eva Birkenstock and Hannes Loichinger, directors of the Halle für Kunst, Lüneburg.

The book is published by Halle für Kunst, Lüneburg, in connection with the correspondent solo show by Dani Gal that took place from 29.3.-10.5. 2009, at the Halle für Kunst, Lüneburg.