

Martine Syms: Ugly Plymouths

February 12 – February 17, 2020, 10AM - 6PM

Opening reception: February 12th, 6-8PM

5239 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles

Sadie Coles HQ, London and Bridget Donahue, NYC

Ugly Plymouths is a one-act play for three screens starring Hot Dog, Doobie and Le Que Sabe. The three characters talk and sing alongside and over each other, one receding as another moves into the foreground. Sometimes dialogue falls into a robotic unison, a kind of emotionless chorus. The voices define the distance between them more than the relation. They have trouble relating, despite their efforts at romance, and this troubled relating is the subject of their dialogue.

In *Ugly Plymouths*, the characters are not visualized; only their surroundings, and surrounding thoughts, are. Videos pan across beach vacations and occupational imagery, like car washing and window repairing. The video installation takes as its establishing environment the Los Angeles described in Bob Kaufman's poem "Hollywood:" in this Los Angeles, the city is sick without leave. Actors, artists, pimps, salesclerks and poets are selling delusions whole-heartedly, where there is always a catch and never a foundation.

MARTINE SYMS (b. 1988, Los Angeles) uses video and performance to examine representations of blackness. Her artwork has been exhibited and screened extensively, including presentations at the Museum of Modern Art, Hammer Museum, ICA London, New Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, and The Studio Museum in Harlem, among other institutions. She has lectured at Yale University, SXSW, California Institute of the Arts, University of Chicago, Johns Hopkins University, and MoMA PS1, among other venues. Syms' recently presented exhibitions include BOON, Secession; Shame Space, ICA Virginia Commonwealth University; Grand Calme, SCHQ; Big Surprise, Bridget Donahue Gallery; Contemporary Projects: Martine Syms, Serralves Museum; Projects 106: Martine Syms, Museum of Modern Art; Fact and Trouble, ICA London. From 2007-2011 she was the co-director of the Chicago artist run project space Golden Age, and she currently runs Dominica Publishing, an imprint dedicated to exploring blackness in visual culture. She is the author of *Implications and Distinctions: Format, Content and Context in Contemporary Race Film* (2011).