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# SUPPOSING I LOVE YOU. AND YOU ALSO LOVE ME.

**Wendelien van Oldenborgh**

**1 November 2011**

Wendelien van Oldenborgh's artistic practice explores social relations and the role of gesture in the public sphere. Utilising the format of a public film shoot, she collaborates with participants in different scenarios to co-produce a script which can, in turn, constitute a film or become another form of projection.

*Supposing I love you. And you also love me* (2011) is Oldenborgh's most recent work, co-commissioned by *If I Can't Dance I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution* (Amsterdam) and presented at *Speech Matters*, the exhibition held at the Danish Pavilion on the occasion of the 54th Venice Biennale, Italy. It is also being shown in November 2011 at Wilfried Lentz gallery in Rotterdam, as part of an architectural intervention. For Ibraaz, van Oldenborgh has adapted her installation for this digital space through the combination of script and four fragments from the slideshow in a small format.

The work was conceived as an *entr'acte* to van Oldenborgh's larger research project, and has developed out of a collaboration with a group of young Belgian and Dutch students from different backgrounds. It also brings in the voice of Tariq Ramadan, a Swiss-Egyptian philosopher, theologian and professor of Contemporary Islamic Studies in the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Oxford University. The collaboration resulted in a script that exposes the mechanisms used to silence certain voices in current society, specifically in the Netherlands. The students act as a chorus in a playful interchange with Ramadan's ideas and thoughts, which explore issues such as diversity, fear, conflict, and his own interrupted engagements in the city of Rotterdam.

The script was formed *ad hoc*, during the shoot, and was guided by the cast's own real-life experiences and forms of expression. The final short montage of slowly dissolving still images and dialogue has been edited as a polyphonic composition of voices, musical tones and images - each discrete inscription resonating with the others in their difference.

Freedom of speech is one of the key issues in current public debate, one that is constantly contested and rethought. The issues explored in Wendelien van Oldenborgh's work are not singular and are presented as a reflection of what is also happening in other northern European countries and, given the steady erosion of civil liberties in many countries today, this work also informs any discussion of events and developments in the Middle East & North Africa.

**Amira Gad**

Wendelien van Oldenborgh

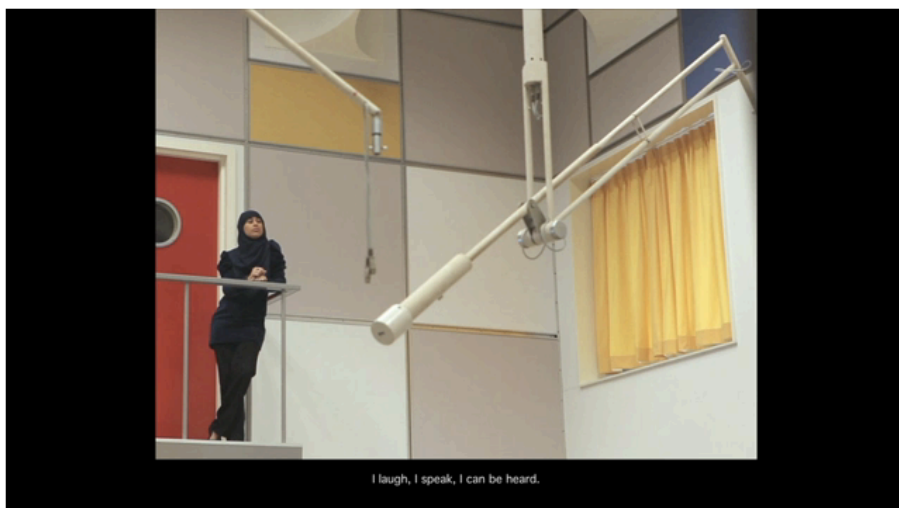
*Supposing I love you. And you also love me*, 2011

Architectural intervention with bench and projection, montage of still images with dialogue sound, English subtitles, 13'

Courtesy of the artist

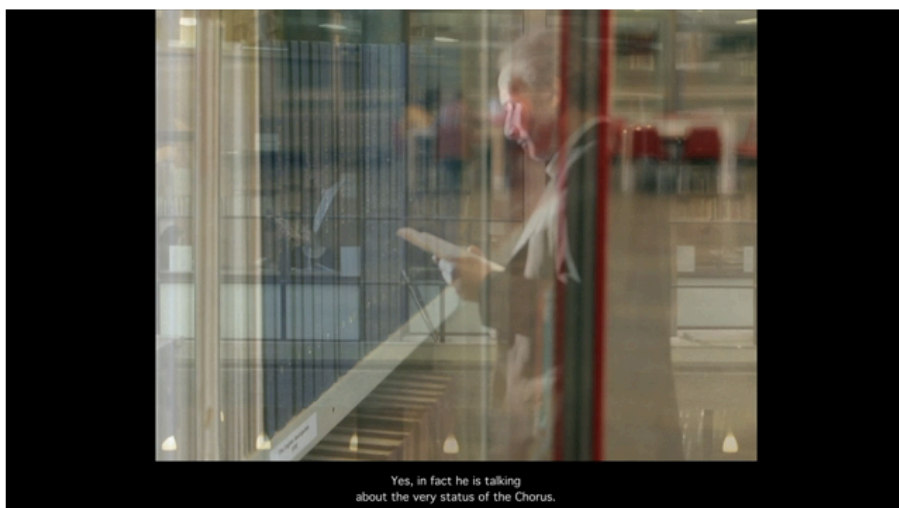
## Scene 1 - Place

Fragment: 00:37:23 to 02:15:09



## Scene 2 - Situation

Fragment: 04:59:01 to 06:45:19



### Scene 3 - Fear and Suppression

Fragment: 06:45:20 to 07:59:10



### Scene 4 - Attack

Fragment: 08:55:09 to 11:46:14





## Transcript

### Scene one 'PLACE'

INT. Auditorium, Royal College of Art, London; and studio 7, Muziekgebouw van de Omroep, Hilversum NL

JANNE That's here.  
AHMED Yes  
JANNE You recognize the wall.  
AHMED Ah, is it live, or what? It's a radio broadcaster from the old days. What did they play? Did they really play live?  
ALBERTO Yes. They still do.  
AHMED Really?  
(drums)  
TARIO What do you do with your voice?  
HANANE (laughs) With my voice? I laugh, I speak, I can be heard.  
TARIO What is this building and what are you doing there?  
HANANE Just talking.  
TARIO Are you broadcasting?  
HANANE I can see a large building, very high, lots of space. Primary colors. There are some rods hanging here.  
ALBERTO Microphone.  
AHMED Yes, microphone.  
ALBERTO A cello.  
HANANE I can see a beautiful black piano.  
TARIO And the public.  
TARIO Was it, was it in the 60's? Or afterwards, it seems an old building.  
JANNE Light  
AHMED Yes  
JANNE Lots of light.  
AHMED Do you understand it?  
ALBERTO A little, yes.  
AHMED Really?  
(laughter)  
AHMED (reads:) Because the architectural and urban concepts of space and spatiality were used as signifiers for the desired openness, unrestrictedness and dynamics of the new democratic society...

INT. Primary colors, glass, hallway

TARIO Sometimes in the way we are dealing with, you know, the tensions between religion and modernity it is as if in modernity it is absolute freedom, and in religion it's absolute norms. And it is conflicts,

it is as if they are irreconcilable traditions and I think that you can see parallels in the way we are looking at these forces that are defining ourselves.

INT. Looking out across a garden to the library, glass, reflections

TARIO On the other side: this perception that modernity is based on rationality is completely wrong.

You know, in fact I started to look at Nietzsche through the window of suffering, the concept of suffering. And then I came to this first book that he wrote, he was very young, he was 26. And he wrote a book where everything which came later in Nietzsche's philosophy is there. The first is: Art is the best way to define life. And to understand life. And art is all about oppositions and conflicts.

And saying: "At the end of the day we get the essence of everything in the Greek Tragedy. And Tragedy is to be alone and individual and it is to face your destiny and your fate without having an answer. And he is saying: "You might not have a rational philosophical answer, but you can get an artistic answer through a process of reconciling the irreconcilable dimensions of life."

INT. Upstairs glass hallway, primary colors

HANANE (to JANNE) You are... I don't really see you as a Belgian Belgian. Because your way of being Belgian is totally different from that of a person who, for example attends the College.

JANNE So I actually resemble a Moroccan?  
HANANE For me, in my eyes, yes you do.

(laughter)

### Scene two 'SITUATION'

INT. Larger space, reflecting glass, bodies seated on a table, only seen in reflection

HANANE And that is where it conflicts.  
AHMED Indeed, we don't form a unity, because we... For example in Belgium: all those who have various nationalities, or a different background, they come together. They will, for example, attend the same school.  
HANANE How many nationalities?  
AHMED It will be 40, more than 40.  
HANANE 40, more than 40. And this is also difficult because not everyone understands the other. For

## About the author

**Wendelien van Oldenborgh** is an artist based in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. She received her art education at Goldsmiths' College, London, during the eighties and has been living again in The Netherlands since 2004. Van Oldenborgh has participated in the 54th Venice Biennial (2011), the 29e Bienal de Sao Paulo (2010) and the 11th Istanbul Biennial (2009). She has exhibited widely, including at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; the Generali Foundation, Vienna; the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam; MuHKA Antwerp; the ICA, London. She recently received the Hendrik Chabot Prize 2011 from the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, the Netherlands. Wendelien van Oldenborgh is represented by Wilfried Lentz Rotterdam.