

**T**wenty-five. That's how many reasons Rosemarie Trockel and Marcus Steinweg give us to describe their fascination with the writer and filmmaker Marguerite Duras.

Duras' novels have long passages where characters do little more than observe each other in silence. Many moments are blank—words are often missing from her sentences, descriptions remain elusive, and dialogues feature questions that disregard their answers.

“She attacks the organization of discourse, suppressing links, breaking up its linear unfolding with repetitions, making way for suspensions, spacing, breaks, and multiple distortion, prioritizing the word over the sentence.” (Marcelle Marini)

Try and imagine Trockel and Steinweg's *Why Marguerite Duras?* alongside a video by Judith Hopf and one by Molly McFadden. A new but related question surfaces almost immediately: *Why Judith Hopf and Molly McFadden?*

McFadden's *Achieving Power* (2011) is set in what looks like a house museum. The artist herself is just spending time there—standing, waiting, lying down, pretending. The film starts and stops, scenes repeat, and occasionally, a voiceover speaks with broken, empty, and unoriginal words. In *Zahlen!* (2008), Hopf removes verbal exchanges entirely. The artist prepares a horse for a visit by a group of wealthy buyers—and stands by in silence while it answers their questions.

In both, the narrative content is bare: the artists are waiting and watching. We watch them watch.

For the most part, people don't think much of unknown forms of speech, moments of non-communication, or silent acts of observation. For Duras, McFadden, and Hopf, those are everything. Why? *Because to touch a truth is to relate oneself to the namelessness of the origin.* (Trockel & Steinweg)

An exhibition with Molly McFadden, Judith Hopf, and Rosemarie Trockel & Marcus Steinweg is on view July 6, 7, and 8, 2012, organized by Rose Marcus.