

Apparatus Projects

Max Guy and Lili Huston Herterich

The Dog Named Sit

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You and your party approach the temple and are greeted by a Crow.

It is perched on the expertly milled timber framing the wall that surrounds the temple compound. The Crow's head is turned to the side simultaneously looking towards you and your cohort, as well as at the goings on in the courtyard. Over the wall you can hear the sound of a human voice cackling and yelling "Sit" always followed the growingly desperate whine of a dog.

While still maintaining a peripheral view of you and your party, but without turning its vision away from the courtyard the Crow opens its beak and asks, "What brings you here, travelers?"

You open your mouth to respond but nothing comes out, your fellow party members, observing your lack of response open their mouths to interject and provide an answer, but no one says anything either. None of you are mute, the problem is that none amongst the group can remember anything before approaching the temple and seeing the Crow on the wall.

"You cannot remember before now, can you?" The Crow says "It is the nature of this place. You will remember once you have entered the forest on the other side of the temple."

"Well, what are you doing here?" you probe the large black bird, as if to make up for your silence earlier.

The Crow responds, "Just as you cannot remember your past while you are here, I cannot look into the future while I am. So, I have taken roost here, to watch what I cannot foresee and to find out what Sit will do."

"Sit?"

"In the courtyard, beyond your view are a young man, and a dog. The Young man has been expelled from the temple for killing the previous guard dog. He is as crafty as he is cruel and remains in the temple by hiding when the other monks come around. Sit was meant to serve as the temple's new guard dog and was trained without being given a name. A name, which would only be bestowed to it should it pass the training."

The bird continues "While the other monks were away the man found the dog, feeding it meats and naming it Sit, making it the only word to which it responds. When the monks returned and called the dog it would not respond to any command, for when one has a name, one wishes to be recognized by those whom one loves by such a name. When the monks ran out of commands to come, they tried 'sit' which

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engaged its attention, but also forced it to stay in place. Believing the dog to be incompetent, the monks had to carry it out to the courtyard, where Sit will most likely starve, as it will not respond to the commands to retrieve and eat the food put out for it. While the monks tend to their duties, pray or go from the temple, the Young Man emerges from his hiding place to taunt the dog. He calls it forth to the promise of someone who recognizes it by name, but he knows that it is also too well trained to get up when it is called to 'sit'. The dog cries for the only one who knows its name to come towards it as Sit cannot seem to overcome the cruelty of its only name and mandate while the young man laughs. This exercise repeats daily until Sit's cries or the young man's laughter grows too loud and attracts one of the monk's attention to check in on what is happening."

"That fucking sucks" a voice behind you says. The longer you stay here even the names of your friends fades, all you can recall is coming here together.

"Yes" replies the Crow with a sigh, "Which is why I wait and watch to see what will become of the poor creature."

"Is there anything Sit can do?" you ask

"It will either continue to settle for a recognition that leaves it starved and stagnant...or" for the first time it turns its head a little more over the wall, its attention trailing off to something happening in the courtyard

"Or?" you prompt

The Crow doesn't seem to hear you, as more of its body turns towards the courtyard, towards whatever has seemed to engage more of its attention

You and your party decide to take leave of this cruel place without memory, but you ask the Crow "Should we meet again will you tell us what happened here?"

The Crow hears you this time and says without turning back, "Crow's have no past, we can only see the future. But if we meet again and you ask me, I will try."

As you and your friends enter the forest, you hear a new sound in the distance, a growl, followed by a young man's scream. The flap of wings can be heard overhead.

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Max Guy is a multidisciplinary artist who works with paper, video, performance, assemblage and installation. He uses appropriated material and deskilled working methods as a fast, ergonomic way of reflecting the world and filtering it through personal affects. Guy received a BFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art, and an MFA from the Department of Art, Theory and Practice at Northwestern University

Lili Huston-Herterich is an artist originally from Chicago, currently based in Rotterdam. She works with sculpture, photography, sound, video, and (recently) performance. Her practice is radically dependent, and informed by feminist research methods: she aims to trace the ideas, people, materials, methods, history, and lineages her work emerges from. Her work has been exhibited recently at Het Nieuwe Instituut (Rotterdam, 2019) and Index Foundation (Stockholm, 2020), and will be exhibited this year at Apparatus Projects (Chicago, two-person exhibition), Peach (Rotterdam, solo exhibition), and Badischer Kunstverein (Karlsruhe, group exhibition). She has a MFA from the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam