

2016 Highlights: Charlie Fox

The first of our 2016 highlights series features Marianna Simnett, Stranger Things, and a trio of the year's best 'freak moments'

BY CHARLIE FOX



Emily Wardill, *No trace of Accelerator*, 2016, film still. Courtesy: the artist and carlier | gebauer, Berlin, STANDARD(OSLO), Oslo, and Altman Siegal

Emily Wardill

'Art', according to the mad ballet dancer Vaslav Nijinsky, 'is a fire in the brain'. No one is more dedicated to melting the cerebral cortexes of their audience than Wardill whose film, *No Trace of Accelerator* (2016), which debuts next January at Bergen Kunsthall, Norway, uses a report about unexplained blazes

plaguering a remote French town during the 1990s as the spark for a meditation on chaos, horror stories and fairytales. 'Wardill Oeuvre Syndrome' (e.g. feelings of vertiginous weirdness, wonder, unease) should be expected throughout.

Marianna Simnett

So hypnotic, this British artist's work palpates sinister tissues inside the body that few others can touch. Her latest solo show – at Seventeen's new gallery in New York's Lower East Side – twins the installation she first showed in January of this year in London, *Faint with Light* (all works 2016), in which looped audio of Simnett hyperventilating until she's unconscious is set to the flash of panicky strobes, with her latest film, *The Needle and the Larynx*, which records her voice box being Botoxed to alter its pitch and comes soundtracked by Simnett's warped recitation of a fable. Brooding on girlhood and its traumas, she operates with the creepy elegance of Narnia's White Witch.



Marianna Simnett, *The Needle and the Larynx*, 2016, installation view, Seventeen, New York, 2016. Courtesy: the artist and Seventeen, New York; photography: Gregory Carideo