

Berlin Art Link  
 07 Mar 2014  
 1/4

## Exhibition // Intuition Supersedes Sexuality for Dorothy Iannone at Berlinische Galerie

[f Like](#) [Share](#) 59 people like this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends like.

Article by *Graham Haught in Berlin*; Friday, Mar. 7, 2014



Dorothy Iannone – "Dialogues X" (1968/69); Sammlung Aldo Frei, © Dorothy Iannone, Photo: Jochen Littkemann



Berlin Art Link

07 Mar 2014

2/4

**Dorothy Iannone** is an artist who has been misrepresented for a long time. Writers have chided her work as “folkloric,” parents have guarded their children from her grand gestures of eroticism, and the unsolvable riddle about Iannone resides in the cornerstone query as to whether or not she is a feminist. All of these questions and unexplained assumptions about Iannone are mere distractions from the work itself. **Berlinische Galerie's** new exhibition, *Dorothy Iannone: This Sweetness Outside of Time*, provides a closer, unguarded examination of Iannone's work, which at its core reveals itself as an intuitive celebration of life, love, and art.

If we are to apply basic affect theory as a lens to analyze Dorothy Iannone's work, it must be remembered that affect is almost systematically related to intuition, or the act of doing. **Gregory J. Seigworth & Melissa Greg** write, in their essay *Inventory of Shimmers*: “**Sigmund Freud** once claimed, in his very earliest project, that affect does not so much reflect or think; affect acts...Cast forward by its open-ended in-between-ness, affect is integral to a body's perpetual becoming (always becoming otherwise, however subtly, than what it already is).”

Dorothy Iannone's urgency for artistic expression and narration coalesces into a transcendental state of non-thinking, but merely acting (as well as feeling in Iannone's case) — otherwise known as the process of “becoming.” The work that she creates is an articulation of pure intuition that voices an awareness of the signified other, and finding joy in the methodology of expression. Take for instance *The Berlin Beauties* (1977/78), which is a long illustrated poem about an abstract lover, which, when he doesn't appear, his absence allows one to become the idealized person themselves. The poetic meter of the writing in this piece upholds a raw, existential humor that is not that distant from **E.M. Cioran's** smug, bleak style. One of the drawings read:

*BUT LISTEN, DANTON, IF YOU FELL IN LOVE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN AFTER HAVING MET ME, I MIGHT TAKE HER FOR A WALK IN THE MOUNTAINS AND MAKE HER DISAPPEAR. EITHER HER, ANYWAY, OR YOU.*

Another moment of seamless curation is presented in the long horizontal displays of *Icelandic Saga* (1978), which allow for the temporal parameters of the work to expand almost exponentially. Each individual drawing is composed of smooth contour bodies laying or lazily standing naked with either minimal or obsessive **Klimt-like** ornamentation in the background, to awaken depth. Walking down the hallway display of *Icelandic Saga*, you can feel the maturation of an artistic relationship blooming, blossoming, and corroding with each step you take.

Berlin Art Link  
 07 Mar 2014  
 3/4



Dorothy Iannone – “Dialogues (unnumbered)” (1968); Sammlung Andersch, Neuss, © Dorothy Iannone, Photo: Markus Hawlik, Berlin

The tone and subject matter of Iannone’s writing blend into each other to warrant a sense of poetic solitude and awakening over her love affairs with **Dieter Roth** and her wanderings as an expat in Berlin and around the world. Iannone’s writing style is as direct yet artistically collapsible as **Kerouac’s** or as any Beat’s writing portends to be in all of its stream-of-consciousness literary discourse. Yet, the elegance of her prose-like poetry lends itself to the stylistic temperaments of writers such as **Ford Madox Ford**, who were able to inventively romanticize the art of living. One of the drawings from *Icelandic Saga* sound as if they were lines from *The Good Soldier* (1915):

Berlin Art Link  
 07 Mar 2014  
 4/4

*I HAVE BEEN UP SINCE MIDNIGHT READING NORMAN MAILER ON HENRY MILLER, MARVELING HOW OUR LIVES HAVE TOUCHED AND HOW WE HAVE, IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, RECOGNIZED EACH OTHER. AT SEVEN THIS MORNING I THOUGHT TO SLEEP BUT SPOTTING THE BERLIN SUN, WHICH IS THE MOST RELUCTANT IN THE WORLD TO SHOW ITSELF, I SAID, GOD HELP US MARY, THE SUN IS SHINING.*

On the surface, Dorothy Iannone's work may appear as an over-ripe explosion of sexual complexity, and to some it is even offensive — but those critics have missed a main point, which is that her work is a celebration of union. However temporary or terminal a relationship may be, Dorothy Iannone's work suggests that there's an infinite galaxy of fragile experiences and tenderness to be found even in the most fleeting of interactions. Iannone's work allows us to see past ourselves, and instead feel the most beautiful feeling there is to experience: desire located in intuition.



*Dorothy Iannone (2002); Photo: © Rolf Walter*

All of the arguments and contempt directed at Dorothy Iannone in her long career have never been centered on the art itself. Instead, people have attacked potential assumptions (such as misogyny, feminism, pornography) that her work may elicit. Despite all of these hurdles of misrepresentation, Iannone has continued to make art that functions as a megaphone for our desires. Her work provokes us to believe that a sense of eternity can be found in our ability to continually possess desire. Or, as **Roberto Bolaño** said in *Last Evenings on Earth*: "Books are finite, sexual encounters are finite, but the desire to read and to fuck is infinite; it surpasses our own deaths, our fears, our hopes for peace."