



## Press release

### Galerie Fons Welters

**8 September – 27 October 2012**

Opening: Saturday 8 September, 17:00 – 19:00

Opening times: Tuesday - Saturday, 13:00 – 18:00

### Paulien Oltheten

*“It’s my imagination, you know”*

In **Paulien Oltheten’s** third solo exhibition at Galerie Fons Welters, observation and imagination cross paths. The exhibition ‘It’s my imagination, you know’ is composed of a selection of photographs and videos made during the artist’s travels in Burma, Israel and Russia over the last few years. In her artistic practice, **Oltheten** makes spontaneous, and sometimes staged registrations of people’s gestures, postures and their relation to everyday objects in the street. For instance, a photo collage shows a young girl on the bus, who keeps a paper roll around her finger and holds it to the side of her head. Like a stream of thoughts the “film” of bus tickets unrolls in the air. In **Oltheten’s** ever-growing image archive, behavioural patterns reveal themselves time and again.

Physical peculiarities often attract **Oltheten’s** attention. But the specific contexts where she finds and creates her images, although unconsciously, do influence their content. The video that gives the exhibition its title, actually has no image. Watching a black screen, we overhear and read a conversation between the artist and a passer-by in Burma. Ropes hanging down from the balconies, used for pulling up newspapers, have triggered the view of a twirling dance of stretched-out arms in the artist’s mind. She is eager to visualize the idea. However, the man who lives in a country with only ‘a little democracy’ expresses his doubts about this artistic intervention. For him the gesture – hands up! – holds a totally different meaning. ‘It’s my imagination, you know’ the artist explains herself in vain, ultimately leaving us to wonder about the image in its potential state.

Since 2007 **Oltheten** has performed several versions of her ‘Sort of Lecture’ in which she interweaves different works in a narrative structure, layered in form and time. With a camera in her hand, she browses through piled up photographs, zooms in on details, films paper sheets with text comments and shows moving image; all directly projected onto the screen. This structure now forms the starting point for a new display form. In the exhibition, two short two-channel videos are screened in which video, photographs and texts are combined with the artist’s hands directing the storylines. While preserving the rhythm of a talk, **Oltheten** presents one story connecting flowers, flip-flops and a balcony (‘Like Romeo and Juliet’) and recalls a desired choreography of people joining together and splitting up at a crossing. These videos pull us right in to the artistic moments of both discovery and “failed” attempts.

Finally, **Paulien Oltheten’s** last line of the imageless video reads: “Thank you. And have a nice day, but... maybe... maybe I try...”

[Rosa Juno Streekstra]

*Paulien Oltheten (Nijmegen, NL, 1982) studied at the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam, and in 2013 she will be a resident artist at ISCP, New York. Exhibitions include: ‘Walk on a line...’, Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam (2011); Dvir Gallery, Tel Aviv (2011); ‘de Volkskrant Beeldende Kunst Prijs’, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam (2010); ‘Portscapes’, Boijmans van Beuningen Rotterdam (2010); ‘Off the Record, Proposal for Municipal Art Acquisitions’, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (2009). In 2012 she was awarded the Dutch Doc Award 2012.*