

LOOK

Press Release

ADAMKÓ Dávid / Holly STREEKSTRA **The Language of the Enemy** 8 October – 6 November 2011



LOOK
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Look is a non-profit exhibition space inside of a custom-designed peephole on a Pest apartment door that – alongside the traditional forms of exhibition making – aims to promote experimental endeavours that take place beyond the confines of established venues.

Opening:
8 October 2011 – 6 p.m.

Open: every day between
10 a.m. and 10 p.m.
(it is advised to make
previous arrangement by
telephone)

In the early 1960s, actor Zoltán Gera studies the English language voluntarily. At the Hungarian College of Theatre and Film, he is suspected of spying and writing reports for the British Council, which is considered a 'covering organization'. Therefore it is thought he is learning *the language of the enemy*. The State Protection Authority opens the letters he sends to his British friends and the British Drama League, complaining that he is not allowed to go to London and that he is forced to decline the invitation to study theatre at the British Drama League. In 1964, Gera is imprisoned for incitement against the state as a result.

In the prison, a Grecian guards Gera's cell. Gera is commanded to tell jokes day by day to quench the guard's thirst for laughing.

With the help of art, meditation, and personal expression, the prisoner tries to transform this unpleasant situation and discovers a moment in which he overcomes the system that is capturing him. *The Language of the Enemy* sets a memorial for Gera's glorious moment while also exploring those layers of expression and states of mind that make us capable of dissolving a tense situation. A chain of symbolic hand gestures, *mudras*, which tell a parallel story with Hindu and Buddhist philosophies, escorts the video story. The unfolding chain of images is a narration of the narration that lifts the spoken words to a more sophisticated, expanded and timeless level of communication. This video is the first collaboration of Holly Streekstra (USA) and Dávid Adamkó (Hungary), inspired by a Gera's television interview and the spatial character of the LOOK Gallery. *The Language of the Enemy* is a striking reaction to current and disquieting questions of freedom of expression.