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Ceal Floyer

KW INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART
Auguststrasse 69
August 23–October 18

The recent profusion of sparseness in high-profile group exhibitions such as the 2008 Whitney Biennial and this year's "Political/Minimal" at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin have suggested that we are indeed entering a new era of restraint, understatement, subtle irony, and subtle gestures. Following on this trend, the latter institution has aptly chosen to open the season with a Ceal Floyer solo exhibition, the artist's fourth in her adopted city. Floyer has mastered a minimalist language of deceptive simplicity and quiet humor; her obvious affection for objects, language, and games permits a philosophical supplement to the material paucity of the work. One can't help but smile at the exhibition's title, "Show," which serves as both a defensive identifier and an ironic nod to the word's synonymous conflation with spectacle; in this case, the show consists of sixteen pieces, many of them barely visible, spread over the institution's four floors. But with Floyer, what you don't see is often what you get—her pieces leave one to ponder their possible implications well after encountering them.

To those already familiar with her work, the exhibition may seem like a grab bag of Floyer's signature tricks, though a few more recent surprises make the show worthwhile. Of the former, one might point to *Double Act*, 2006, the projection of a simple red curtain on the wall, or *Monochrome Till Receipt (White)*, a work Floyer created in 1999 and reactivated for this show. Here, what at first appears to be a neglected wall turns out to house a single grocery receipt consisting entirely of white foods and products. But these are worth trudging past to arrive at the debut of *Things*, 2009, a sound installation in which the artist has isolated the titular word in a variety of pop songs played at random through speakers embedded in fifty white plinths, or *Works on Paper*, 2009, Floyer's collection of small pieces of paper that are inscribed with scribbles from customers testing pens at stationery shops, arranged across three walls and forming a scrawled archaeology of the present.

— Travis Jeppesen



Ceal Floyer, *Things*, 2009, CDs, CD player, speakers, cables, wood, dimensions variable.