



*Well Behaved Women*  
Amy Jorgensen  
5:00 minutes, 2 channel HD video  
2014

In *Well Behaved Women*, Jorgensen juxtaposes two well-known phrases. “The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain” and “Well behaved women seldom make history.” The first phrase, announced loudly, is a phonetic exercise used in the film *My Fair Lady* to teach Eliza Doolittle to transform her once Cockney speech to that of a well-spoken and pleasing lady.

Yet, echoing underneath this confident march of repetition is the haunting whisper of words, “Well behaved women seldom make history.” Although a phrase now championed by feminists, it was originally written by Harvard University historian, Laurel



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Thatcher Ulrich, a Mormon, to address the lives of colonial women. In this context, the whisper functions as a type of consciousness that references Jorgensen's suffragette ancestor, Edna Berg, undermining the clear public obedience found in Eliza.

The dual monitors facing each other are, in fact, mirror images of Jorgensen herself. But the images are fuzzy, unclear, and the continual repetition of voices over and over, with the vocal intonations shifting, reflects the struggle to balance (or to topple) the learned and performed behaviors women inherit with actions that could inform new identities.

—Laura Hurtado, curator