In case of loss;
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Edited and designed by Nathan Jones.
Introduction

Today’s news suggests that the context for this exhibition is the pursuit of truth and fact, with a charged endeavour to relinquish artifice and guile or a world where single statements have huge impact and paradoxically no meaning or something to have both solid and political issues regarding the divide of my/your hospitality or is good or not for sale, nor relevant, but timeless or measuring time, space and place or framed or beautiful, world, where are you?

But the weekly cycle is nearly through, and here we are still breathing and wouldn’t it be great if we could make it all shit again? And all of this could be a load of bollocks, so take what you will and enjoy the wine. And it just won’t work. And artists create knowledge by portraying the world we living today, challenging the world as a whole and making the possible exist within a culture. And one must be aware that in seeking truth and understanding you will come short – but may try again. And there is a dynamic tension that says something without speaking and the strength of art practices over news, is that they are capable of depicting the present in the generous light of the timeless.

The title “In case of loss;” therefore says something without speaking, its odd semi-colon hiatus does some work in implying the temporary nature of gesture, you make of it what you will. It offers new perspectives on art and life through the lens of objects. It refers to the counter understanding that something has the potential to be found in this detritus and makes our audiences ever present and self aware, summarises the nature of being, editing out what is no longer relevant, what is a waste of time, will not be apparent in the exhibition itself but will be when new people start. It means nothing in a conventional context, instead it refers back to its own status as a secondary source.

I spent weeks doing something you will never see. The mastery of art is after all not possible, a fluid understanding of speech, not giving a fuck, apparent in this exhibition and throughout the, we got through it. Though could have hoped for more, we choosing willingly, without knowing.

This book is the product of discarded memories that created and informed what is today of all days. 8 misguided individuals trying to make sense of the mess we call our family, everything broken and fixed. Of years of stumbling around in the dark looking for the chance to find the switch to find out why we bothered to take part at all. Making good the space, the work and the various relationships forged over two years about to be broken... stuff all over the place. There is crap everywhere. Artists prone to over thinking, and making difficulties.

Where we are now, we have been, and the floor is dirty and the walls are marked. Ideas, words and thoughts finish, dragging the whale placing it in the whole, head on his paws and his tail tucked in. He is very broad. Blood sweat and tears and wouldn’t it be great if we could all come together, set aside our differences and put on a good show!

What all the works share is assurance, a common sense of being, apart from having to belong to an enforced group, aware of current issues surrounding contemporary art and a deep desire to explore everything: yourself, surroundings, abandoned buildings and anything else you can find. Depicting the world in a way that appeals to the senses. The artists worked together, separately interrogating what togetherness – being exhibited together – means. If only it wasn’t so chaotic. Works placed finally in context, artists now changing the context. The products of the creative mind can be of use to society. Pieces of something you may forget or remember, the things you have lost and found boxes are a pleasure to scan through, today of all days.

The exhibition itself includes sculpture, video, painting, installation, sound and drawing, reflections on play, consumerism, archaic and mythological practices within contemporary art made to speak their own language we use to express ourselves is free unbound. A culmination of tools will be used to put up the walls and build the exhibition I will make the audience challenge their own existence.

Co-authored by the artists
August 6th 2018, Liverpool
Bo Tsang, my father, has been painting since he was a child. He taught me all I know about acrylics and oils and more importantly how and what to paint: take an existing picture. Something colourful and bold – van Gogh, Klimt, Schiele, Lowry, Picasso. Divide it into a grid. Using this as a template, sketch the outlines of the picture onto a canvas or a wall; once you’re happy with the proportions, fill it in. Start with the lightest colours and finish with the darker outlines. If you don’t have canvases, paint onto walls, doors, bits of scrap wood you can find in skips even big pebbles.

We did this together throughout my childhood. I was usually assigned the final detailing. Laboriously painting the thick black contours of these lurid figures. Adding highlights to flesh and eyes. Linseed oil and turpentine. We share a love of portraiture. As a child, I made pencil sketches of Rosetti’s muse, Elizabeth Siddell. With her red wavy hair and distinctive, thick features; she became familiar. A portrait of his second wife, Dot (in the style of a van Gogh) hangs proudly in reception of my father’s business, ‘The Wirral Credit Union’. Accompanied by piles of finished canvases. At odds with the dark oak laminate floor, chatting girls on the desk and an alphabetised wall full of loan cheques ready to be paid out.

Since his stroke in 2014, and after a long hiatus, he’s painting again. Mostly Picasso. “I’ll be finished by tomorrow, I’m very quick!” I catch him in the back garden of the credit union, painting Picasso’s ‘Mediterranean Landscape’ (1953) directly onto the wall. I visit him a week later to paint with him at home. He doesn’t feel like it. When I left the next day, he gave me a grid-creased print-out of Picasso’s ‘Head of a Woman’ (1960). The original is owned by the Metropolitan Museum, though not on display. Judged too formulaic of his late style. I, myself, prefer ‘Jacqueline with flowers’ (1954).

Once, beauty was as central a topic in philosophy as truth and morality. Aristotle thought beauty could be found in a certain proportion and ratio. Plato believed beauty was an ideal, with all beautiful things being mere copies of the Form of beauty which exists outside of time and space. Much later, and in denser prose, Kant argued for a set of criteria placed on judgements of beauty. These included ‘disinterestedness’ (beauty before pleasure) and ‘universality’ (we want others to agree with our judgements of beauty). Usual Kant, lots of conditions and distinctions. Yet notably, Kant was first to write about beauty not in only nature but in fine art. The role of the fine artist for Kant included:

a) The ability to generate an aesthetic idea that adequately captures conceptual content.
b) The capacity to present art ‘tastefully’ or make accessible work in order to be understood by many.
c) To instil not only the conceptual content of the work but also allow the viewer to experience the same harmonious yet excited state the artist had in creating.

Here, there is a balance between the creative imagination and the rational understanding. Moreover, Kant talked of the genius of fine art. The genius is the artist-maker of beautiful things. Those who are radically original (fine art is never an imitation) and whose work has ‘the look of nature’. It’s neither artificial nor overwrought. Yet how can we recognise beauty? For Kant, the pleasure in beauty arises from a ‘free-play’ between imagination and understanding (whose currency is ‘concepts’). When trying to make sense of the beautiful we fail to successfully place it under a concept. We just can’t make sense of it through categorising. It can’t be simply defined. The joy is in this failure of conceptualisation. This failure of understanding is beauty.
In Dafen village, Guandong Province, China: technically-skilled painters churn out replicas of famous master art works. In its heyday, it was claimed that over 60% of all the oil paintings in existence were copies made in Dafen. Experienced artists can churn out dozens in a single day retailing for around £40 each. However, more recently, the economic crisis in the west has led to the market for knock-off van Goghs, Picassos and Monets almost collapsing. Now the copy-artists of Dafen are adapting their style to the newly affluent market closer to home. A young artist, Weng Yugo, commented, “There is a difference in taste. I’d say Westerners prefer classical pictures which tend to be very dark. Chinese people like bright colours.” Luan Liyin, head of the Dafen Fine art Industry Association, believes that there needs to be a shift towards innovation and creativity if Dafen artists are to survive. “The era when painters relied on replicating Western masterpieces is gone. People now have higher demands for art, and that requires painters to create original works.”

Victor Lowenfield, the father of arts education, famously disparaged the use of colouring-in books and sheets for children:

“The dependency upon someone else’s outline of an object makes children much less confident in their own means of expression. They obviously cannot draw a cow as good as the one in the coloring book.” (Creative and Mental Growth 1947: 176)

Although colouring between the lines may seem to hinder creative expression recent research shows it can lead to a reduction in anxiety and depression. Dr. Tamlin Conner from the University of Otago claims, “Our findings bode well for the potential psychological benefits of colouring-in. In this way, colouring-in could be considered an act of everyday little-c creativity, in much the same way as gardening or gourmet cooking. With its low risk and accessibility, we feel comfortable adding colouring-in to the growing list of creative activities for improving mental health outcomes.” Returning to children’s apparent love for filling in the lines, it can be argued that there are many benefits to colouring-in. Not only does it help build focus, concentration, colour recognition (and fine motor skills for the little ones) there is a great sense of achievement for a child to complete a task from start to finish.

Gina Tsang is an artist who uses painting, film and installation. She is currently interested in beauty, meaning and stories. georginatsang.wordpress.com
Jennifer Lock

the question of the animal is fundamental to any enquiry into culture, politics, and ethics today
(Zylinska, 2009, p. 116)

Animals appear in art in many forms: alive, dead (or killed), as image or more invisibly within materials. In line with society’s norms, such an appearance is unlikely to be a positive experience for the animal: “can contemporary artists be trusted with animals, living or dead? [...] the answer is frequently no” (Baker, 2013, p. 1).

Today, the question of how – and whether – we use animals in art, as in other industries, is primarily a question of personal choice and ethics. In the art industry, as in most other sectors of society, the ethical questions of animal-use are usually only raised by the physical presence of live animals – for example when an animal is brought into a gallery space, and their welfare seems a pressing issue. Whilst valid, this situation for critique of the relation between humans and animals in art has a narrow relevance, deflecting from wider questions around what it means to be human and act ethically towards other species. As Gigliotti writes, “using animals is itself one of, if not the primary obstacle to those shifts in social, economic, political, environmental and cultural change we need to make” (2008, p.36).

In recent years fresh approaches have emerged to politicise the animal question. Emerging from animal studies, its influence in political theory is of particular note. Here, the hitherto neglected question of how political communities govern their relations with animals has been foregrounded by several commentators, with radical propositions to overturn the historical disconnect of animals from the polis by promoting their situation within “theories of citizenship, democracy and sovereignty” (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2013, p.6). Such a movement suggests a potential re-siting of animals within state justice and reflects on animal use as a question of state regulation rather than personal choice and ethics. In this, perspectives on the animal are brought into mainstream view, with human and animal interests centred together on level ground. Integral to these arguments is status change: learning to see animals as individuals – like humans – of inherent value within a future society: one where the interests of humans and other animals converge. This proposed “suspension” of our anthropocentric values and ensuing “wonderful disorientation” offers the potential basis from which to re-write societal norms (Broglio and Birrell, 2011, p.2).

The question of the animal asks us to democratise processes, laws and other systems between species. It means that all uses of the animal must be brought into critical view – including in art. A mandate to build new, “meaningful” identities can be foregrounded through the insertion

Excerpts from Mayday! And Other Stories

Not long ago, I took a photo of a youth at a fair. It was at one of those small, uneasy-looking events where a travelling funfair seems to have lost direction in the dark – waking up to find it’s landed on the concrete car park of a supermarket. It was near closing time and dark, around ten o’clock, with sparse huddles of friends and individuals grabbing the last ride before time was called. It was then that I saw the youth standing alone. His body had stopped, randomly I presume, but quite precisely at the intersection of the parking bay lines on the ground, which had the effect of drawing all points to him. The trophy hunter was caught in a spray of fluorescent lights, and then, by my eyes and the camera’s ‘click’.
(from “Trophy Hunting”)

Simmons tried to escape the words that plagued him – I’ll count sheep, he thought. And then immediately after, how strange an idea! I have never counted sheep before – from where has this suggestion come? But no answer came to mind before he began to count: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6... and, no sooner had he reached the number 7, did a carousel of whirling sheep appear within his mind, each pinioned in place with a pole through their back - bleating their number accusingly through his sockets as they passed behind his eyes. ‘What horror!’ he cried. ‘Be gone!’ And suddenly the bleating lulled, only to fade once again into the mantra that seemed now to strengthen and mutate: like a creature was growing around the sound, with mouth and teeth gnawing the words into his skull: we have lived before.
(from “The Crime Scene”)
of fresh perspectives and an escape from false, or undesirable, narratives and representations of the human-animal relationship to date (Malamud, 2012, p.3). How we decipher what we see, becomes of crucial importance in reinterpreting this relationship:

Many people still do not see animals. They may have seen things moving, objects out there, even “pests” that invade “their” territory. But they have not yet seen other living, sentient beings. Our language, our philosophy, our science, our history, our theology, our culture, by and large, prevent us from seeing.

(Linzey, 2009, p. 56)

This revised approach to relations is founded on our position within nature, not outside it - standing alongside other species. Art is often championed for its ability to offer ‘new ways of seeing’ the world and as such, artists are arguably well placed to make a visible and potent political response to the question of the animal.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Marsh and May were creatures of habit. They had routines for everything and today, like every other day in the year, they prepared their breakfasts together (though each had very different tastes) and pulled out their chairs in unison - to sit around their small table. As Marsh’s rear was about to hit the chair however, he became a little queasy. This is completely nonsensical, he thought, but it felt as if the walls were drawing in around him, so completely - so that only himself, May and the table could now fit in. Now Marsh was a logical man – not given to flights of fancy, and he sat down resolutely. He could still see May, smiling her ‘morning smile’ across the table and this reassured him somewhat, although he was still unable to shake off a pressing sense of confinement, that caused beads of sweat to spring from his face and body.

(from "Mayday!")
The “speeding up” of western life as well as the contemporary conditions of distraction and response overload, have led many large sections of society to experience strong feelings of anxiety, stress, and fear. As we struggle to find time to reflect, keep up to the pace of daily life, meditate or simply spend time alone, feelings of being out of control or overwhelm are exasperated. Contemporary tools for coping with these feelings are modes of distraction that come in the form of television, phones and the internet. These tend to over stimulate and fragments our attention leaving us unable to cope with and face what we are feeling inside. They also act as a tool for escaping our present experience, masking the feelings that we are holding inside. These emotions that are within us will brew over time, as we continue to distract ourselves from them they only grow stronger. These powerful emotions eventually grow so strong that they must be released in some form, whether it be an explosive temper, alcohol fuelled behaviour, road rage or treating others with contempt. We are all guilty of these behaviours at some time or another.

My artistic practice explores some of these behaviours and unexpressed emotions through invoking feelings of discomfort, fear and overwhelm within the viewer. A common way of working with difficult emotions is to participate in a practice that slowly, and with care, allows them to unveil themselves. The majority of Eastern spiritual practices work in this way. Through regular committed practice to something like meditation, we can come to reveal emotions that we have buried deep within ourselves. This for most of us can mean the upheaval of many painful emotions and can be intense and even overwhelming. This is a process I have been undertaking myself for the past two years, and it is this that I use to inform and create my artwork. In December 2016 I entered an intense period of meditation, I would sit for up to two hours a day. Something I experienced in myself, as well as others, was a real difficulty to just sit in silence. I would sit to meditate only to be faced with a huge storm of thought and emotion.

As I continued on my path of meditating, and began to experience times of deep peace and well-being, I came to see that within me, and underneath all of this peace, was in fact a deep sadness and anger. These emotions had been trapped inside my body since they were created during traumatic events from earlier in life. So my work reflected this new discovery from within myself. I made a piece of work in December 2017 which involved myself and another participant working with a technique of expressing deep emotions. The piece shows the both of us expressing emotions ranging from crying to laughter to explosive anger. This for me was an important time in my personal development. These emotions had to come out.

Undertaking this process was very difficult indeed and I noticed a huge resistance, within myself and my psyche, to exploring these aspects of myself. Although difficult, ultimately I knew this work would lead to a greater freedom and sense of well-being. It was natural then that my next piece of work would involve the participation of others. I wanted others to have the opportunity to explore these aspects of themselves.

Unexpressed emotions will never die. They are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways.

Sigmund Freud
This new piece of work offers an alternative way of releasing these emotions. In 2015 I spent two weeks in Nepal at the Ashram of Osho (a well know Indian guru) practicing dynamic meditation. This form of meditation was designed by Osho specifically for Westerners, he saw that societal and cultural conditioning had led us in the West having bodies filled up with emotions that were dying to find an outlet to be released. In this latest video piece I guide the audience through some of my own versions of dynamic meditation in the hope that this may serve as an opening to others. In order to do this I would utilise my skills as a yoga teacher.

I fully expect this work will to challenge and bring out resistance from the viewer or participant. To undertake this process, especially in a public space, is clearly quite challenging. How far are we willing to go? Especially under the eyes of others? How free and safe do we feel to express our emotions? What do we fear might happen if we do this in front of others? In my eyes there is a great strengths in vulnerability, it had the power to transform the way we perceive ourselves, the way we relate to others and the power to change society as a whole. The quote provided by Osho summarises my feelings on the subject and is something I have found evident in my own experience.

This work can be the beginning of freedom: freedom from fear, freedom from what is holding you back, all you must do is let yourself go, throw yourself into the deep end and let all this buried emotion find its way out.

The greatest fear in the world is the opinion of others, and the moment you are unafraid of the crowd, you are no longer a sheep, you become a lion. A great roar arises in your heart, the roar of freedom. Osho

Sion Jones seeks to make his audience more self-aware through presenting a range of practices, in the form of video and performance, which he has used for his own personal and spiritual growth. At the moment, he is interested in the issues surrounding being emotionally vulnerable within a public space as well as the power and control dynamics involved with this.

sionjones25.wixsite.com/sion
“Ladies and gentlemen I invite you into my theatre, where adventure awaits for the eyes”
Roger Ballen, Theatre of Apparitions

Works are opaque and multi-layered that capture the layers and the fabric of the mind and freeze the ambiguity of borderline experiences and the complexity of the psyche in a visual form. There is a desire to leave some evidence of existence and an unsettling tension between this desire and the fear that what it makes is washed away. Spray paint cites graffiti for this reason but also show techniques of cave painting.

Working with ink, ash and charcoal - hard edged gestures used autonomously on board, paper, walls and dust sheets to form images that represent marks and abstract beings inspired by history and existence. The supports hold the memory of touch from periods of aggressive human scribbling to gentle rubbing away and smudging. This autonomy within current work is played out in the resulting of visible forms whilst not conforming to a specific nameable place or object. Drawing and painting based gestures using raw materials play a significant role in the work. They are materials that guide the work and offer an opening into a world of visual perception. At the same time by using such materials as a means to question experiences in the world, by extension, offer the viewer a means of exploring their own relationships (s) with and their visions of the world.

THIS DAY

Worked directly on the surface of dust sheets, the crumbling walls of a basement and 24 cheese slice wrappers. On these surfaces, I depict studies of existence in the form of basic primal iconography and sacred symbols, using gestures that have been embedded through the process of evolution.

This Day (2018)
Spray paint, gloss, emulsion on dustsheet and board.

This Day (2018)
Acrylic paint, gloss paint, ash on dust sheet. Basement.

This Day (2018)
Acrylic paint and spray paint on brick. Basement.

This Day (2018)
Gloss paint. Basement.
A bespoke book, entitled This Day consists of work on 24 cheese slice wrappers, their size and fragility evoking that of a Polaroid photograph. Like a Polaroid series, layers of history and gesture recorded on the wrappers act as a diary of the time working in the basement. The diminutive scale and preciousness of the book suggests that it is an important document, perhaps a way to decode the ambiguities of the work as a whole.

This Day (2018)
Ink, acrylic and ash on cheese slice paper
3.5cm x 3.5 cm

BASEMENT PLACE

“Painting is silent poetry, and poetry is painting that speaks.”
Simonides c 556-468 BC Plutarch Moralia

MASK
Victor's coming;
We chant. We sing.
Childhood voices in Attic lair.
These days we play hide and seek in Basement place.
Coming ready or not;
Victor’s here.

OFF THE WALL
Today felt like yesterday.
Or was it the other day?
Or the day before that?
The rain makes its usual noise;
Pissing vomit on earth's nest.
Is it the rain?
That was this morning.
Or was it Friday?
Yogi sings her usual song.
Or was that yesterday?

THIS DAY
In later years you painted Still life with ladybird.
You contemplated ochre to warm the chill.
Magpie visited some weeks before;
Singing a story only she knows.
You said you were ready.
You raised a glass to the air;
talking to those seen only by you.
You whispered, shouted, laughed.
But this day you left quickly;
All packed. Brushes, letters, ring. Check.
Today ladybird often visits;
a comfort for me and maybe for you.

Mikki Gleave is a painter and poet.
mikkigleave.wordpress.com
I am concerned with the way an individual art practice can be developed within the 21st century commercial context; creating various strategies to reconfigure the consumer landscape, or deal with the effects of mass imagery.

Guy Debord has shed light on the public’s place-ment in relation to mass imagery, stating “[t]he spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images”. He talks about the way the public are surrounded by images. We exist in a world where our decision making is affected by consumer company’s array of visual information.

Detournement and subverting have been integral terms for how artists alter existing advertising messages to subvert back to social and political issues concerning the public. These approaches show how an art practice can attack against the mass companies, underpin their message and return back into society, and stopping the effects of mass advertising in the tracks.

The artist Carson Davis Brown constructs all of his work on site in the supermarket. He selects consumer items and assembles them into sculptures before photographing them. The photographs act as the record for what could not last. He then prints these photographs on the stores photograph centre and presents them in the store’s own frames. This is not a conventional art practice taking place in a studio. Like me, Brown is interested in making use of supermarket resources to situate his art practice, disturb and disrupting an already functioning system of consumerism with an alternative mindset.

Tate’s exhibition Shopping: A Century Of Art And Consumer Culture (2003), featured a number of works in which artists represented or recon-structed the consumer landscape within the gallery environment. Like my work, these practices commented on the negotiations and expectations exercised by the public during the everyday past-time of selecting shopping items.

PHOTO-ME

1. Enter store
2. Take two baskets
3. Walk to the home department
4. Take a fox ornament of the shelf
5. Put into basket
6. Walk to meat aisle downstairs
7. Take a piece of raw meat off the shelf
8. Put into basket
9. Go into the photo booth
10. Take items out of basket
11. Place the basket on top of the seat
12. Put the other basket upside down and place the other basket on top
13. Place the raw meat on top of the two baskets
14. Place the fox ornaments on top of raw meat and two baskets
15. Press the passport photo option on the photo-booth screen
16. Press take photo
17. Take another two photos
18. Select the best option out of the three
19. Wait for photo card to print
20. Take the Photo-Me card, and put into pocket
21. Put the two items back into baskets
22. Walk to home department, put fox ornament back on shelf
23. Walk downstairs and place the meat back into the fridge
24. Put the two baskets back
25. Leave the Store
DON’T GO ANYWHERE

Whilst we are watching our chosen programme the presenter says the words “Don’t Go Anywhere”. This suggests that we stay seated, therefore watching what is provided to us all as commercial visual imagery. Companies try to sell an idea, a concept. We focus, deliberate how it could be of significance amongst our mundanity. Adverts have a dedicated time slot, we can choose to switch over, then we are confronted with another bit of visual information, we switch over again, and again until what was an initial choice, becomes an experience of being in the hub of mass production.

The words “Don’t Go Anywhere” apply we would right back, or do we leave? Instead the title mimics the real experience in the home shown on the stage as the audience become trapped within their own realities. We sit down on the sofa, confronted with choice suggested by the artist, at first becomes an array of different visual idea, however as the audience change each channel, we are overwhelmed with the same bit of information, embedded amongst each other as an edited hard cut.

We can’t go anywhere, indeed the stage acts as the platform for performing our own domestic rituals- trapped by choice and by one’s position to leave the stage hoping we don’t miss anything. Setting the installation as a minimal living room space creates an association to house room show displays. Whether we are performing on the stage or the spectators we see all the elements as a fabrication to a consumer living room interior or what is being watched on the screen as corresponding to this fabrication of mass production.

Michael Walls uses installation, photography, performance and video to explore the public’s interaction with their consumer space, establishing a fine line between art and consumerism.

Michaelwallsart.wixsite.com/Walls
Excerpts from THE AUDIENCE AS STORYTELLERS: HOW THE IMMATERIALITY OF PERFORMANCE ART PLACES A NECESSITY ON THE AUDIENCE

I feel that for most of the time I have practiced art, I have been trapped by the word ‘performer’. I think this term comes with awkward and inevitable connotations. It offers a doer and a viewer, a stage and an audience. Perhaps it pushes a space between the ‘performer’ and the ‘viewers’ and thus pre-empts their reaction or forces them into an unnatural one? Sometimes this awkward space is void of ‘humanness’ and is overwhelmed by ‘artiness,’ restricted by the confinements of the ‘art space’ institutions, and some of the connection between the two parties is lost? It is that connection that interests me. It is the connection which allows our stories to outlive us, and be carried away out of the performance space by the listeners, adopted into their own narratives. I have regained my own freedom in one simple proclamation; I now call myself a storyteller.

Amidst my research for my own current work I came across a number of artists who specifically use storytelling, colloquialisms, or conversational narrative as a means of performance. In our 21st century society, does colloquial tone encourage a more intimate level of connection with the audience, and, thereby, serve as a more powerful catalyst empowering the act of retelling? After the audience feel personally addressed do they naturally assume the role of documentation and recall or retell their experience using their own narratives and thereby, grow the work’s lifespan and in a sense, its material quality? Although the artist has control over the performance, the initial manifestations of the artwork, and the audience in many ways, they cannot control the materialisations of the artwork. The audience are not assigned the role of documentation they inevitably become it. There is no ‘other’ in performance (Meyer, 2009). I’ve always been particularly interested in these themes within a religious context because they are the stories I grew up hearing, my father being a Church of England minister. Due to growing up in these ritualistic scenarios with a partisan speaker and a passive audience, I have become fascinated with the language of performance art, especially the relationship between the performer and the audience. “Whether they were aware of it or not, the audience carried the performance out of its birthplace”

SUMMARY

I would like to end this stage of my research by opening up further possibilities for discussion. Perhaps the tools we have for annunciation and perception are no longer fit for purpose. Perhaps in the form of contemporary performance the agenda of the storyteller is futile, the doctrine of the preacher extraneous, the intent for the audience irrelevant. If in performance there is indeed no innocent bystander, if the audience inevitably ‘drash’… if they absorb the content into their own narratives, they become the legs of the artwork, walking it out of the space with them and passing it on through their own voice.

“DRASH”

A particular interest of mine for many years now is the archaic practice of parable telling. So often within religious context symbolic and allegorical storytelling is used methodically for teaching and evoking in the audience a particular train of thought. I wish to focus on the style in which these ‘performances’ are communicated. For example, the Hebrew word ‘drash’ or ‘midrash’ directly translates as ‘to search’. To perform a storytelling or parable, in the tone of ‘drash’, is to intentionally leave the message open ended and not explicitly explain the intended point.

Using this technique for teaching theological sagas from a religious standpoint can spin interpretations away from what the original text intended to convey. This is obviously a problem when the original text in question has assumed the status of divine interpretation. Within the arts however, this is usually the very point. For an artist to show an artwork, especially an immaterial one like performance, they offer it up to their audience and in doing so leave it open to a certain partisanship in its very transformation to becoming in some way materialised. ‘Drash’ can therefore be applied to both storytelling and the way in which audiences engage with performance works and retell of their experiences, so is inevitably present in works which incorporate both. I also had to know that my own artistic interpretations may get lost in the process and the death of the author may take place, perhaps not after one retelling but imminently after a few. This is ‘drash’ in contemporary performance.
AGENDA

Agenda is a collection of short stories, influenced by my own upbringing in a devout religious background and my slow escape, while inadvertently mapping out my course through Liverpool, a research trip to South America, and Spain, drawing on experiences I collected along the way.

The book draws a comparison on a ‘Truman Show’ style spillage of marketing that has bled into our social interactions, with religious men from my own past, who’s every work was infested with agenda. Every chapter is based on truth but thread of true stories sporadically run through the book to offer you a subtle insight into the birth place of this body of work.

There is a reading area in the exhibition space, where you can sit and read through the books. Please make a small donation if you wish to take one home.

The other day, I heard about these little creatures who live in close proximity to our vape shops. They find our air to be pretty toxic, but our exhaled billowing vape-clouds are making it easier for them to grow in number and flourish.

In order to eventually take over the world, they have began slaughtering the sales assistants in local vape shops and using their bodies as puppets. They are persuading vapers to try new flavours and inhale deeper gulps in order to achieve the maximum air saturation of exhaled vape smoke, in which they can survive.

Some vape shop assistants have managed to keep their lives by bargaining with the creatures. They demonstrated an upmost level of passion and often persuade new vapers to vape more,

Breath deeper and speak highly of vaping to a friend.

Extract from Agenda (2018)

Kim Seymour works with storytelling and narrative as a medium for performance, often constructing mixed media performance spaces. Her current work is a collection of short stories entitled Agenda, drawing from her observations surrounding an undertone of agenda within our society.

kimseymour.co.uk // @kimseymourart
Collectively the conclusions from these studies appear to suggest that problem solving skills, perseverance with difficult tasks, learning how to focus within the subject and further afield, an increase in confidence enabling them to step away from their comfort zones, understanding of non-verbal communication and an understanding of why criticism and feedback are important are all factors that are improved as a result of art education (Straus, 2016).

Kendall-Scatter and Wilson (2010) suggest that group work can provide students with the opportunities to develop the social skills needed for them to be able to support each other with both positive and critical feedback which in turn progresses to a mutual respect for each other.

The size and filling of the shapes can be associated with childhood rag dolls and toys which loosely points to the way in which many alcoholics experience some form of trauma in their childhood. This trauma can manifest itself later in life through the dependency of alcohol as a way to deal with it. The shapes themselves, particularly the representation of the human body, are very therapeutic to manipulate due to their barley filling and can bring about a sense of calm.

This piece of work explores the issues surrounding alcoholism through the use of easily manipulated cloth shapes of the kidneys, liver and a representation of the human body. The shapes vary in size and texture but are all of neutral colouring. Some contain text, some contain various alcohol stains and some are plain. They are filled with barley.

There are some negative aspects of case studies that must be considered. They are quite often site-specific which makes it very difficult to generalise any information or data that is gathered. Ethics are extremely important when a school environment is involved in order to protect and safeguard the student, teachers and school itself.
The liver and kidney shapes are a suggestive of the organs most affected by alcoholism. While other organs are also affected, it is damage of the liver and kidneys that is most commonly known and most relatable for the viewer. The text on some pieces is linked directly to the symptoms of hangovers as well as liver disease and kidney failure. The alcohol stains on the cloth provide a subtle hint to enable the viewer to make that link.

Some stains are covered with neutral coloured hand stitching. This act of hand sewing is very intimate and suggests a personal experience. The covering up of the stains brings about the way in which alcoholics can be extremely good at hiding their addiction, making it almost invisible to others. It also suggests shame in being an alcoholic or being associated with someone addicted to alcohol.

The amount of shapes in this work is suggestive of the fact that alcoholism is an ongoing issue for a diverse range of individuals. Even as a recovering alcoholic there is temptation, relapses and the constant repetitive thoughts about drinking even as they become a background thought overtaken by the willpower of the individual.

The limitations of the research project are very important when discussing the results. The lack of generalisation is an issue for this investigation because any data collected is specific to the school, teacher and students involved. This puts limits on the validity of the results achieved from the research with regards to research that is external to this specific classroom environment. If a second phase of research was to be carried out the results from it are very unlikely to match that of the first phase. This is because the students who participate will be different, the school will be different and there will be different classroom environments such as variations in available technology.


Rebecca Barrow’s work has a core theme of alcoholism. The mediums and sculptural nature of the work provide a creative outlet to portray how addictions manifest themselves in people and what triggers them.
Since the beginning of the MA, the emphasis of my work has undergone a shift from a manipulation and challenging of the understanding of the art object - through experimentation with form and colour in my sculptural practice and the re-imagining of “classic” materials, i.e. using the process of canvas stretcher alteration, creating a contoured painting surface, to interventions within the gallery space. The hope is that these interventions, which I consider a continuation of my material experimentation; latch onto established modes and aim to capitalise on already existing processes of display inside and out of the gallery. The newest development of all of this is the emphasis on re-activating the viewer as participant: a sort of never-ending anonymous collaboration that tries to invoke a sense of self-awareness and reflection.

These new elements to my practice lean toward socially engaged practice; in a word, ‘radicalisation’ has been the paramount focus for me. What it means to be radical, how it manifests, and how radical culture can be brought into the gallery space, are theoretical questions that have come to underpin my work. However, I welcome further open dialogue with the works themselves. The subjective quality of my practice – seen in formal, sculptural paintings – has continued to develop into these new ideas. Usership – challenging the pre-existing concepts of spectatorship, ownership and authorship, offers a way in which viewers become users and hopefully begin to engage with the work in more meaningful ways. Essentially, the work holds its own autonomy and is direct in its relationship with the audience.

The key developments over the last year for my practice have been a constant playing and learning with material – predominantly paint and its ability to become sculptural form. Alongside this, my own behaviours, the things I’ve read and the events of the past few years, have challenged me to question how I value time. The value we give to ‘free time’ and ‘labour time’ and how I manipulate and challenge the form of the work.

I feel as though a lot of the issues we face today as a society have to do with money, time and the value of both. How do we come to conclude the worth of each, more specifically for ourselves? Do we consider time spent a waste if there were no inherent value in it? Do we do so in the present or only in hindsight? Do we still consider the same activity a waste if we are paid to do it? Why do we take part in an activity even if we know there is no chance of receiving monetary compensation for the time spent, as long as we value the time spent doing it?

How do we then understand our relationship to one another because of this?

The ideas brought forward in Stephen Wright’s, *Toward a Lexicon of Usership*, allow you to begin to understand that as a means of engaging the audience - for the purpose of affecting change with art. He says that a practice of usership; over authorship, spectatorship and ownership, allows for more opportunity for audience to bring their own perspectives and views into engaging with the work. It was this that allowed for be to begin to mould the ideas for the Open Eye show, his perspectives on 1:1 Scale brought about a challenge of the limits of representation. So far as representation can only ever be surrogate to what it’s trying to represent, not a challenge of the copy; but saying that for the effectiveness of News from Nowhere as it is on Bold Street to be brought to the gallery, you would need to do so at a 1:1 scale. The bookshop in the gallery needed to act like the original. Since then, I have continued to explore ways in which you can activate the audience. The works that have held elements of a kinetic potential/tension, especially those that are also potentially self-destructive in nature.

Take the run of party poppers from the ‘Void’ exhibition; pulling the string pops the popper and also breaks a piece of sculpture off the wall, knowing both of these inferences, the audience has to decide whether to play or not with the work; or, to the exhibition, ‘There’s No Such Thing as Boredom?’, in which there was a triptych of “Self-Portrait” piñatas and a handy bat to get to the sweets inside for anyone willing to take a swing, again a challenge of audience/author/ object dynamics, freeing up the audience to change the form of the work.

For the final show I plan on continuing to encourage play. Play Art, or art that is based around play is described by Brian Sutton-Smith as “a new art form that calls for active participation of the viewer and it offers a range of different types of involvement. Some... focus on shapes and structures, others rely on... techniques like mechanical principles, physics or digital technology. Whatever the elements, Play Art aims to get the audience ... engaged by creating a playful mindset, by enabling playful and creative activities, and by encouraging hands-on experimentation. It is the intention... that the works be touched, manipulated and experienced. Variable or movable sculptures can be rearranged or set into motion. Play Art captures the viewer’s imagination, stimulates curiosity and gives rise to the joy of discovery and play.”
The works exhibited; *No Ball Games Allowed* (2018), *Tug o’ War* (2018) and *Monday* (12:20 runtime, 2018) are all born from the self-imposed question of what to do with life, and my own personal challenges of balancing working and free time. I would say ultimately I want you to look at my work through these big questions, but also through smaller questions, like what to have for dinner and why you should shop local, sit on the stoop with your mates, and accept plant gifts off of your neighbour. Moments given to us freely like these can often seem earned and in a ‘need to be worked for’ category of activity; but post-neo-liberalism, and with the rise of automation, and the need to work less, the big question becomes ever more important in how we spend and earn our time.

**READING LIST**

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Mark Twain  
*Play Art*, Brian Sutton-Smith  
*The Outsider*, Albert Camus  
*Either/Or*, Soren Kierkegaard  
*Ways of Seeing*, John Berger  
*1984*, George Orwell  
*Animal Farm*, George Orwell  
“Politics and The English Language”, George Orwell  
*Toward a Lexicon of Usership*, Stephen Wright  
*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, James Joyce  
*Breakfast of Champions*, Kurt Vonnegut Jr.  
*The Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels
Liverpool School of Art and Design
MA Fine Art Degree Show 2018

Rebecca Barrow
Mikki Gleave
Sion Jones
Jennifer Lock
Danny Ryder
Kim Seymour
Gina Tsang
Michael Walls