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VOLUME 4

03.15 –
08.17

INTRODUCTION

The perceived character and use of Ambika P3 inevitably changes from year to year – some changes are sudden and some creep up on you without warning.

Ambika P3 is not only an exhibition venue, however we do regularly hold one or two major exhibitions a year. NOW has been shown at the Venice Biennale and also at the Marian Goodman Gallery in Paris.

We also saw Fab Fest for the first time originating from the University's new Digital Fabrication Workshops, and a fabulous alumna returned to Westminster in London Fashion Week – Dame Vivien Westwood – complete with an anti-fracking demo. In our commercial bookings we noted a new focus on Men's Fashion. During this time we broaden the range of exhibits in Architecture and performances in Music, and with substantial international engagement.

Potential Architecture was guest curated by David Thorp, and in his essay he says the selected artist/architects saw 'architecture as shaping life' – its nicely put and allows all aspects to be revealed in this impressive group of Europeans, Russian and Nordic multi disciplined artists, architects, sociologists, provocateurs, urbanists and nomadic. This was the very opposite of the World Architecture Festival event which focussed on current international architecture world-wide. The Alien Sex Club exhibition accompanied a PhD presentation by artist John Walter in which he made clear that the architectural space of the sex club increased the risk of gay alienation. A major exhibition known as ADAPTr with seven European partners and 42 research fellows mostly architects, was one of two defining exhibitions in which the outcomes of substantial research funding could be disseminated by exhibition and to the public.

Musical performances included two performances by the Royal Academy of Music who built a stage and installed raked seating for the performances. Non-classical performed two events engaged with schools as the musicians. London Contemporary Music Festival ran an exceptional 7 day Festival with different performances on each day – inventive, lively and with a very simple changes that suited Ambika P3.

Continuing our regular but infrequent major exhibitions, NOW was an exceptional installation of work by Chantal Akerman and was named one of the best ten exhibitions of 2015 by Adrian Searle in the Guardian. Ambika P3 provided a perfect location to instal these challenging, poignant and beautiful works with an unprecedented number of visitors and great critical acclaim.

The six artists were selected to make new work in relation to the extraordinary research into the work of two Physicians of sixteenth-seventeenth century, known as Casebooks. The resultant exhibition of an international standing, and provided great insight into the research work through our partnership with the University of Cambridge, supported by the Wellcome Trust.

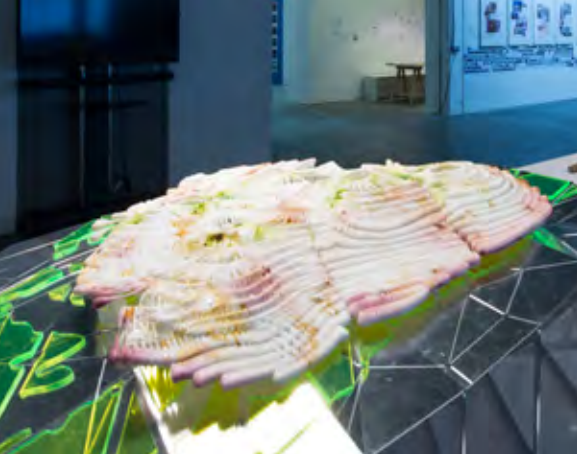
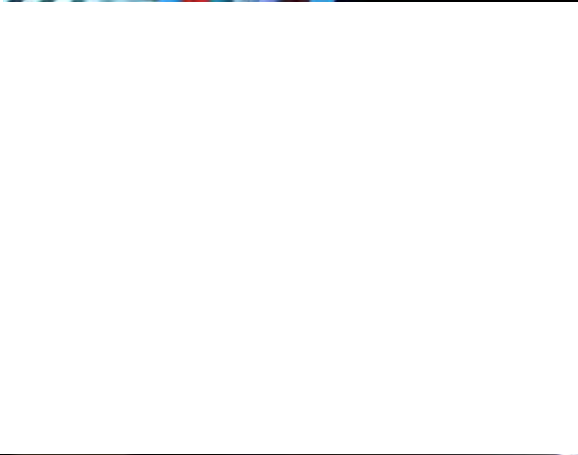
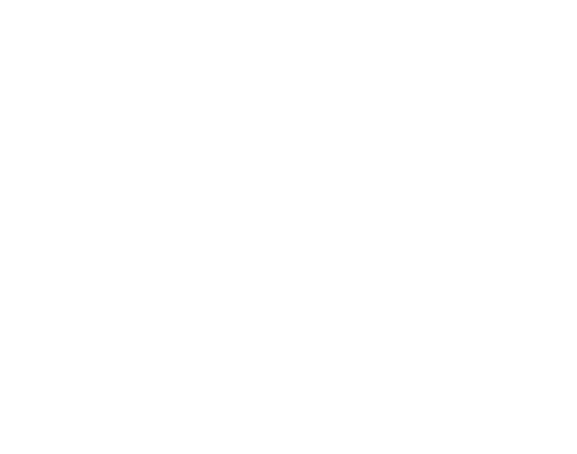
Increasingly the student organised and students supported events are moving beyond the degree shows, and into new areas of student engagement. Student Pride is a regular event, and student helpers are employed as invigilators. The Fab Fest has run for two years, and much enjoyed with lively engagement with students from overseas. The Action Space inflatable was built with student helpers. A notable new move has been the MArch Design Studio 15 with a one-day exhibition and crit. One student later described this one-day event was his best day in a university, ever.

On every occasion, the use of our extraordinary space is itself the driver of that event whatever it is. Whenever someone visits the space, whatever their background or discipline, whether there is a current activity or not, the spectacle of the space impresses and releases a new creative energy. All events use the space for the rawness of its architecture, potential for installation in any medium, the sense of theatre or spectacle, the lack of daylight and an acoustic to be used. These challenges become the inspiration to them to respond. The constant is that this is a laboratory for experimentation and discovery.

Ambika P3 is a unique and hidden secret of the University of Westminster, and as we plan our second decade of events with confidence and creative imagination, we intend that Ambika P3 continue to positively raise the profile of the university as part of the Cultural Scene of London and with impact on the industries we embrace.


This volume is dedicated with gratitude to Angad Paul for his imagination and insight.

Katharine Heron
Director, Ambika P3



VOLUME FOUR

SEPTEMBER 2015
AUGUST 2017



However we achieve it, the
work has to be problematic.
David Hall.¹

ARTISTS' FILM AND VIDEO AT AMBIKA P3

Ambika P3 is an inspiring site for the development of installation works in film and video specifically because of its physical qualities as a giant underground black box. This area of work has been my field of practice for over 30 years and one of the major strands of the curated programme at Ambika P3. This curation has interrogated artists' film and video and its relationship with installation art, experimental film, video art, expanded & narrative cinema, television and traditional fine art practices.

Between 2007 and 2017 we commissioned and exhibited a series of exhibitions that aimed to bring the distinctive elements of film and video installation to Ambika P3's project space in order to explore their form. Ambika P3 as a space has been central to these exhibitions, conceived to be neither a gallery nor a cinema but an experimental project space, a laboratory in which both the practice of curation and the resultant conclusions could be tested and manifested. In physical terms, the constituent parts of artists' film and video installation are the screen, time, image, projection and audience which added to the architectural elements of the space such as walls, height, scale and floor, provide the basic building blocks of these projects. Each project manipulated these elements in an experimental yet rigorous approach to produce original artists' commissions.

These curated exhibitions involved either commissioning new site-specific work for the space or adapting and developing existing artists' film and video projects. In separate exhibitions by Ward (*Rink*, 2009), and McCall (*Vertical Works*, 2011) the cinematic apparatus of projection is scrutinised through its displacement to a specific experimental site. The manner in which *Rink* displaced the geometry of the cinematic apparatus by using the floor as a screen subverted the traditional architecture of the cinema and opened both a conceptual and physical immersive space within which audiences

could experience the work. This developed the critical issues at play, namely the construct of perspective, the illusion of identification and the lyrical possibilities of a non-linear abstract set of compositions. In *Vertical Works*, the only space defined is that of the projection beam, luring the viewer to engage with the work as pure material light. The works created a poetic world out of light photons and transform the industrial space into a site of contemplation. Both works were experiential and provided a variety of forms of engagement for the audience – from visual pleasure and contemplation to more specific understanding of projection and its effect.

In Hall's *End Piece* (2012) the different facets of site are explored through the sculptural aspects of video installation and the participatory context of broadcast television as social phenomenon. The commission was a contemporary reworking of Hall's early work *101 TV sets* and formed the centrepiece of the exhibition featuring 1001 cathode ray tube TV sets of all ages and conditions. The TVs were tuned to the five analogue stations playing randomly which gradually ceased broadcasting between the 4 and 18 of April 2012, as the analogue signals broadcast from London's Crystal Palace were finally closed down. As the broadcasts ended we were left with only the white noise of a past order, now replaced with the dizzying and multiplatform, pay as you go, consumption of contemporary moving image.



The curation of film and video alongside other art practices is examined in *From Floor to Sky* (2010) and in *Casebooks* (2017), questioning both its specificity and its ability to be curated alongside other media. These exhibitions confirmed that while artists' film and video was previously a distinct practice it is now firmly part of the ecology of contemporary art practice.

Burgin's solo retrospective exhibition *A Sense of Place* (2013) enabled an examination of the relations between photography and video with particular emphasis on curating a trajectory through the body of his work. Through the building of nine separate gallery spaces, the exhibition mapped out a series of physical propositions for the interpretation of his work. Amati's *Under* (2014) provided design strategies on how to develop and transform a single screen work through the architecture of installation. Under's layout created distinct spaces for the projection of art, studio and documentation material, guiding the audience through the distinct contexts of the project.

NOW by Chantal Akerman (2015) focused on how curation can be used to configure the spatial manifestation of personal and political identity. In the mezzanine entrance was her earliest work *In the Mirror* (1971/2007), a portrait of a woman looking at herself naked in the mirror. In the lower side of the space we fitted 5 works and in the main space the new piece *NOW* became the centrepiece of the exhibition and would be accessed last.

This layout had the advantage of allowing the audience to have a beginning and end point as well as a more open territory they could navigate in a non hierarchical manner. The architecture of the exhibition, designed in close consultation with Akerman, reflected her nomadic life experience and art strategies.

These works together represent a sustained curatorial engagement with the raw elements of film, video and installation (screen, projection, audience, light, object) as changes in technology are fragmenting our notions and definitions of what individual media histories and practices are. In film and video installation, the operations of site, projection, immersion, movement, subject, identification and context were explored. They remain the operatives which guide our relationship with the both the artist and their work.

1. David Hall in conversation with Michael Mazière quoted in Cate Elwes (2012) 'Phases, Ruptures and Continuities', *Moving Image Review & Art Journal*, Vol.1, No.2.

Dr Michael Mazière
Curator Ambika P3

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POTENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

The interdisciplinary exchange between artists and architects has become an increasingly important area of debate and practice. Contemporary artists consider the territory of the built environment as a site redolent with possibility for the exploration of identity, local – global politics and what is sometimes referred to as the poetics of space. A concern about the relationship between art and society has experienced a resurgence of interest from artists, prompting an examination of contemporary art in a new light as mainstream contemporary art practice has expanded to include social engagement. Potential Architecture is not an exhibition about the design and construction of buildings but considers architecture more as the shaping of life; with the organisation of complex systems, aspects of living environments, that are manifested in contemporary art as part of an approach that includes both disciplines. It highlights the growing discourse surrounding the blurring of disciplines between art and architecture and shows what can happen when artists locate themselves at the interface between the two, opening up a new kind of terrain – less navigated and with a limited exposure to the wider public – where the object still has a function but not as a commodity. It brings together artists from sites around the world, each addressing this issue from a perspective located within the specific conditions of their own immediate environment.

Potential Architecture was planned for two art spaces: Ambika P3, London where it took place in the spring of 2015 and, in the summer of 2016, the Tromsø Kunstforening in Norway. Its inception is the outcome of a visit to Tromsø in May 2012 and initial conversations with Joar Nango about the different meanings of architecture and, subsequently, a series of discussions between the artists, Alexander Brodsky (Russia), Sean Griffiths (UK), Joar Nango (Norway) and Apolonija Šušteršič (Croatia) that took place at a symposium 'Potential Architecture' at the University of Westminster in April 2014. These four artists were joined by the Norwegian artist Edvine Larssen for the second iteration of the project in Tromsø.

The specific conditions in northern Norway have influenced the work of Joar Nango and connect with Alexander Brodsky's ideas of a DIY low tech aesthetic and recognition of vernacular building as an expression of cultural identity. Nango studied architecture and works as an artist producing site specific installations inspired by the creative simplicity that exists within rural environments in Northern Norway. Alexander Brodsky's work is characterised by a concern with traditional building, using local materials to produce an architecture that celebrates Russian heritage whilst at the same time acting as a critique of the unregulated and corrupt building industry manifested in a huge metropolis. Apolonija Šušteršič's work makes work simultaneously as a sociologist, designer and city planner in order to reactivate physical and cultural space, a characteristic of Joar Nango's practice too. Sean Griffiths critically explores key notions such as space, authenticity, taste and representation, assumptions about which often remain uncontested in normative architectural practice. For Griffiths, such issues are important elements in the production of social and political, as well as, aesthetic meanings in architecture. Edvine Larssen's work is concerned with inseparable conditions of space, structure and human experience. These she combines to create site-specific installations that explore the relationship between people, place and scale. Larssen has expressed her approach as "Theatrical, but not theatre; architectonic, but not architecture; sculptural, but not sculpture". A description that fits the overarching premise of Potential Architecture as a whole.

David Thorp. Guest curator



Apolonija Susteric presenting to her invited Underground Discussion Club in the space she made for that purpose, with a panel chaired by Ekow Eshun.



above. Apolonija Susteric installation in Edinburgh.
 opposite. Alexander Brodsky installation with felts from Tibet by Joar Nango.





above. Joar Nango.
opposite. Sean Griffiths.

WORLD ARCHITECTURE FESTIVAL 2015

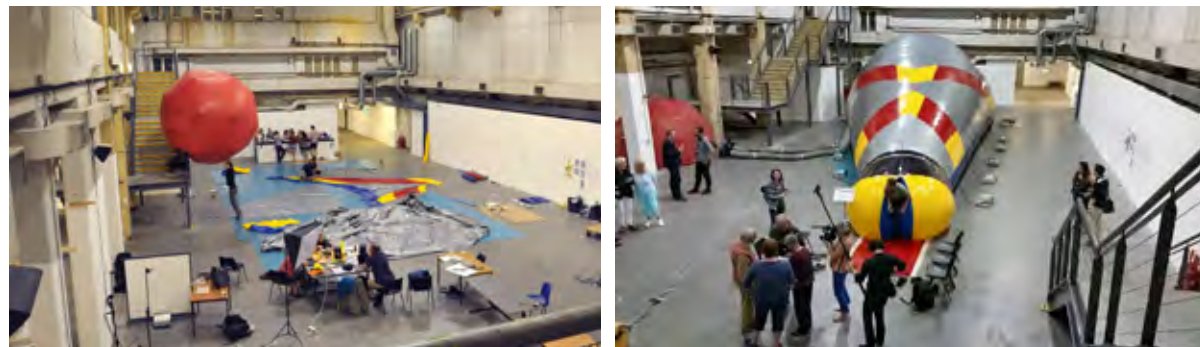
The World Architecture Festival held a special three day event in London of presentations, discussions and debate about architecture world wide, presented and organised by Jeremy Melvin and Paul Finch. WAF was a three-day event for architects and interior design professionals. WAF is the place where the world architecture community meets to celebrate learn, exchange and be inspired. It is a global architecture festival that combines: Awards, live judging, conferences, networking, parties, city tours, exhibition, and more.

worldarchitecturefestival.com



ACTION SPACE

09.07.15

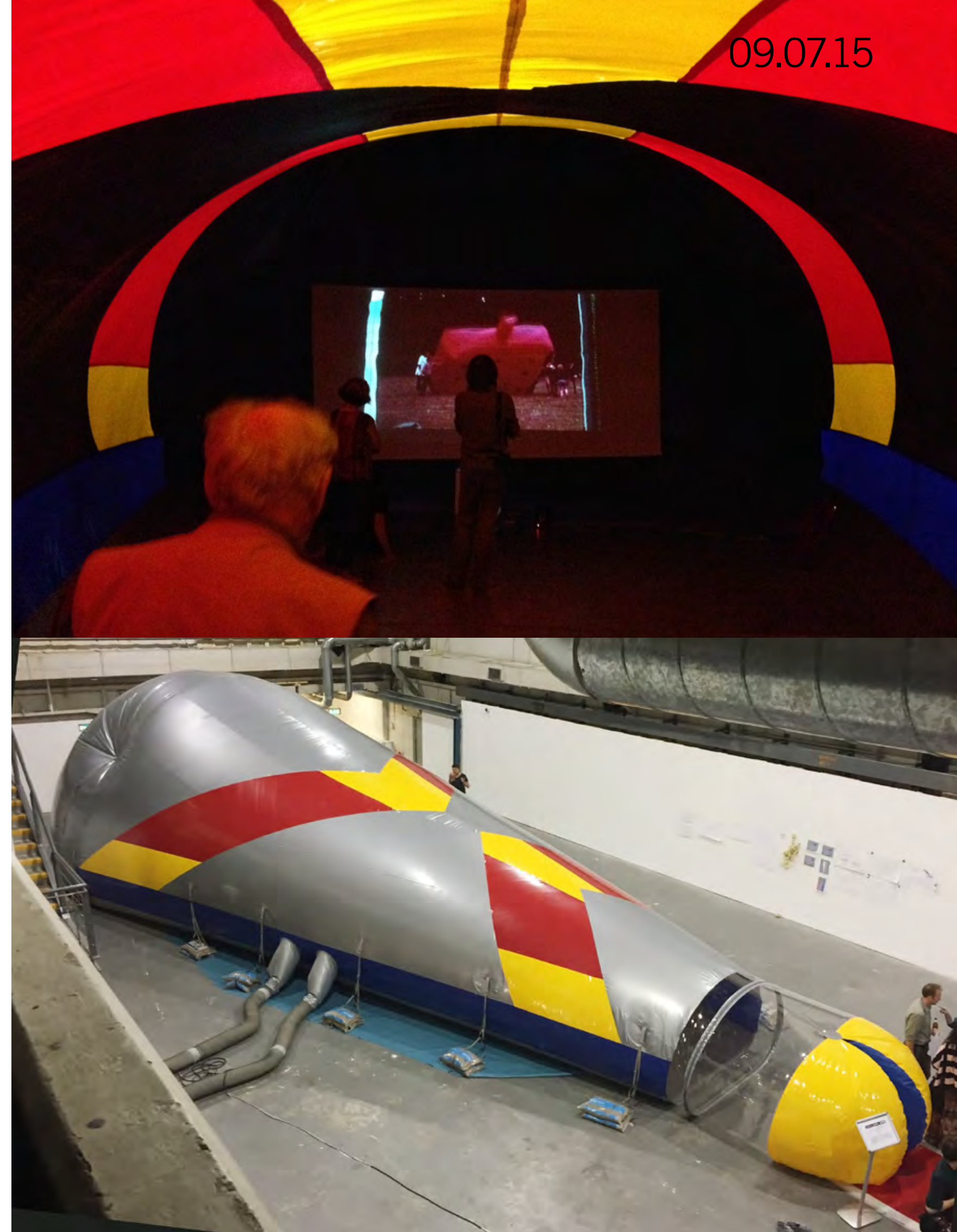


An inflatable cinema was built at Ambika P3 as part of a film and installation project about the radical group 'Action Space' and their ideas surrounding play, education and the arts. The inflatable toured around the UK during the filmmaking process; but before the structure left the gallery we celebrated its creation.

The film project explored the history and contemporary relevance of 'Action Space', a radical collective who were ground-breaking pioneers of art in public, laying the foundations for arts in the community during the 1970s. Founding members of Action Space and volunteers spent 7 days building a new air structure which will both featured in, and was used as a venue for, the resulting artists' film.

Students from the Department of Architecture worked to build this inflatable as part of a one-day workshop with Will McLean. The event was sponsored by the Mike Davis Trust.

The film Action Space, directed by Huw Wahl, was shown at the Regents Street Cinema.



ALIEN SEX CLUB

JOHN WALTER

Alien Sex Club is a major multimedia project by British artist John Walter, which explored the relationship between visual culture and HIV today. Alien Sex Club used the spatial device of the cruise maze to bring together works that address the complex subject of contemporary sexual health. The exhibition consisted of a large-scale installation based on the shapes of cruise mazes, found in sex clubs and gay saunas. It comprised sculpture, painting, video, performance and installation. Visitors were immersed in a multisensory world in which they watched videos and live performances, whilst lost in the maze and having food and drink in the performance bar.

Alien Sex Club used popular forms including hospitality, fortune-telling, comedy and the aesthetic of carnivals and festivals to introduce issues to a wide audience and make the subject palatable, interesting and fun, while grounding it in cross-disciplinary research. The project was part of Walter's AHRC funded PhD at the University of Westminster. His research in epidemiology is grounded in a collaboration between Walter and Dr Alison Rodger, Senior Lecturer and Honorary Consultant in Infectious Diseases and HIV at University College London, supported by a Small Arts Award from the Wellcome Trust.

Alien Sex Club involved artists, activists and HIV specialists, clinical academics and scientists in collaborations for a public programme of talks and performances that will provide audiences with a new vocabulary for understanding and talking about HIV and the factors contributing to its transmission. The public programme will be free to visitors. The architectural installation also offered visitors free rapid HIV testing facilitated by Terence Higgins Trust.

Curated by Ellen Mara De Wachter

Supported by The Wellcome Trust, Arts Council England, Ambika P3, University of Westminster, Homotopia, Sabir House, Dean Street Wellbeing Programme, MAKE Aberdeen, Terrence Higgins Trust, Pasante, i-Base.









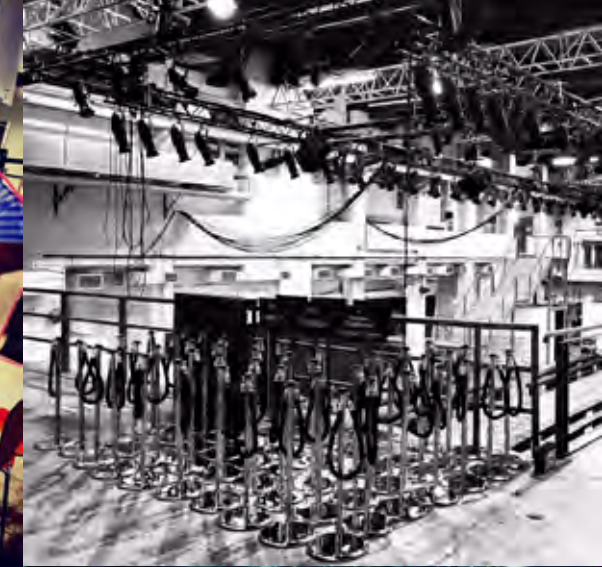
THE PENSIVE IMAGE MA PHOTOGRAPHY

The Pensive Image was the 2015 University of Westminster MA Photographic Studies exhibition. The show was an opportunity to view the work of the eleven visual artists who had completed a period of intensive study on one of the leading photography courses in the UK. The course has established itself as a launch pad for many successful photographers, artists and curators and is proud of its well-structured yet open framework incorporating both academic study and photographic practice.

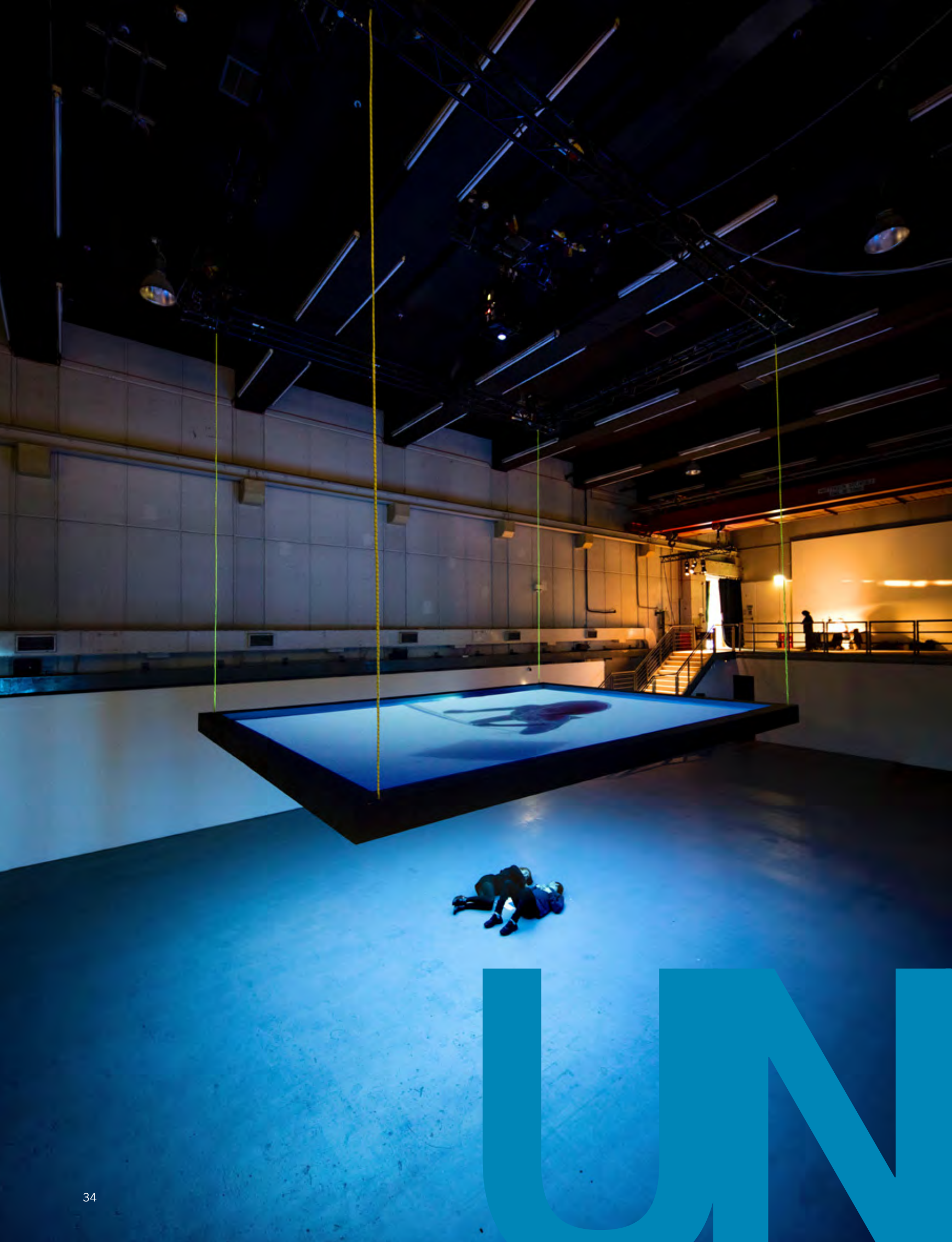
The participating students, who originated from backgrounds as diverse as Japan, Greece, Switzerland, China and the UK applied different perspectives and modes of expression in their exploration of a range of subtle yet vital themes. These themes from beneath the surface of contemporary society raise questions around body and space, wellbeing, illness and feeling, possession and capitalism.

The Pensive Image has been adopted as the title of the show in order to promote further discussion in this area. The notion of ‘The Pensive Image’ has been addressed by a number of leading theorists including French thinkers such as Roland Barthes, Jacques Ranciere and the British film theorist Laura Mulvey. Dedicated essays written by scholars from the field of photography were included in the show's catalogue.

A wide-angle photograph of a large indoor arena, likely a sports hall or exhibition space. The stage is illuminated by bright spotlights, and several people are visible on the stage and in the audience. The date "20.09.15" is overlaid in large white text in the upper center of the image.



FASHION WEEK



In her film *Under*, artist and BAFTA award-winning filmmaker Martina Amati (born 1969) returned to her artistic roots and expressed her lifelong passion for freediving: the act of swimming underwater on a single breath of air without artificial aid. A mesmerizing multi-screen installation that immersed the audience in her vision, *Under* brought the experience of freediving into an urban landscape and gave viewers the sensation of being submerged beneath the water as they gazed up at a massive screen hovering just above their heads.

Amati combines her fascination for the water with her art and film background in *Under*, capturing herself performing beneath the water's surface. Inspired by the relationship between the physical and the spiritual that is at the core of freediving, Amati pushed her personal limits to hold her breath underwater for longer and dive deeper to discover new 'depths'. With a team of freediving cameramen, she filmed each of her underwater performances on one breath of air. In *Under* these were projected onto large-scale screens across vast expanses of space, emphasizing the infinite and gravity-free essence of water, and evoked the experience of being suspended in time and space, submerged beneath the surface.

In 2012 Amati was awarded a Wellcome Trust Large Arts Award, giving her the opportunity to realize *Under* (detailed information about the installation is below.) This grant also enabled Amati to work with the masters of freediving and the scientists who research its effects on the human body. She teamed up with Professor Kevin Fong, co-director of the Centre for Altitude, Space and Extreme Environment medicine and an honorary senior lecturer in physiology at University College London, who has worked with Amati on a documentary to explore the physiological effects of freediving which was shown in the installation.

Martina Amati, born in Milan, Italy in 1969, is a British-Italian BAFTA winning filmmaker. She lives and works in London with her husband and son. Amati studied in Milan at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera, graduating with Honours. She was one of the artists selected for the first Salon Primo Di Brera. Her short-films won the BAFTA/LA, the UNICEF AWARD (*A'mare*), the BAFTA in 2010 (*I Do Air*) and another BAFTA nomination in 2012 for *Chalk*, which also won the BIFA, among other international Awards. Amati's ongoing collaboration with fashion designer Bella Freud, gave life to *Submission* and *Je t'Ecoute*. With *Under*, Amati returns to her artistic roots. Supported by the Wellcome Trust

UNDER



30.10.15

CHANTAL AKERMAN

NOW



Ambika P3, A Nos Amours and Marian Goodman Gallery presented a major exhibition of work by the internationally celebrated filmmaker and artist, Chantal Akerman. Entitled *NOW*, this was the first large scale exhibition in the English-speaking world of Akerman's installation work and coincided with the UK premiere of her new film, *No Home Movie* (2015) at the University of Westminster's Regent Street Cinema, London.

Comparable in force and originality to Godard or Fassbinder, Chantal Akerman is arguably the most important European director of her generation' J. Hoberman

Chantal Akerman was widely considered to be one of the most unpredictable, farsighted, indefinable, rigorous and playful film artists of her generation. While showing the troublesome complexity of human existence, Akerman's works are filled with beautiful imagery, music, magic of chance, yearning and hope, yet she also investigates hot-button themes such as racism in the American South, illegal immigration, and terrorism in the Middle East.

There were seven works at Ambika P3: the centrepiece was *NOW* (2015), a powerful seven channel video installation with surround sound originally commissioned for the Venice Biennale 2015. For this work, Akerman collected images from desert regions, specifically violently contested regions in the Middle East, her aim to present the current condition of violence and conflict as lived experience. The stillness of much of her work, often concerned with interiority, domestic spaces, and forgotten and erased histories, is here replaced by the clamour of war and amplified noise.

Other works in the exhibition spanned from 1995 and investigate a variety of emotive themes such as issues around the border of Mexico and America (*A Voice in the Desert*, 2002), the atom bomb and Hiroshima (*Maniac Summer* 2009), woman reclaiming images of herself (*In The Mirror*), the dichotomous relationship between presence and absence (*Maniac Shadows* 2013), the Eastern bloc countries before the fall of Communism (*D'Est* 1995) and the sublime (*Tombée de nuit sur Shanghai* 2007).

Chantal Akerman: *NOW* was jointly curated by Ambika P3 (Michael Mazière) and (Joanna Hogg and Adam Roberts) and presented in association with A Nos Amours and Marian Goodman Gallery. It was supported by Arts Council England, The Centre for Research and Education in Arts and Media (CREAM) and Marian Goodman Gallery.

Chantal Akerman

Chantal Akerman (born 6 June 1950, Brussels, died 6 October 2015, Paris) was a filmmaker, writer, actor, producer and composer, and one of the most important European directors of her generation. Akerman made more than 40 works – from 35mm features to video essays to experimental documentaries, including *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*; *News from Home*; *Les Rendez-vous d 'Anna*; *Je, tu, il, elle*. She is represented by Marian Goodman Gallery.

Solo shows included: Galerie Marian Goodman (Paris) Marian Goodman Gallery (New York), Blaffer Gallery (Houston, Texas), List Visual Arts Center at MIT (Cambridge, Mass.), Miami Arts Museum, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, Camden Arts Centre (London), Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Princeton Art Museum, Museo de Arte Latino Americano de Buenos Aires, École supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Toulouse, *Kunstverein Munich*, *Centre Georges Pompidou*, Frith Street Gallery (London), *Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume* (Paris), Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, *Palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles*, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, IVAM Centre del Carme (Valencia), The Jewish Museum (New York), Kunstenfestivaldesarts, (Brussels), and The Kitchen, (New York).

Previous: Chantal Akerman, *NOW*, 2015, Seven channel video projection with surround sound and various objects. Courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery. Opposite: Chantal Akerman, *In the Mirror*, 1971/2007, single channel video projection with sound (16mm transferred to video). Both courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery





Above: Chantal Akerman, *NOW*, 2015, seven channel video projection with surround sound and various objects. Below: Chantal Akerman, *Maniac Summer*, 2009, four channel video projection with sound, editing and spatialisation for image and sound: Claire Atherton. Both courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery



Above: Chantal Akerman, *Maniac Shadows*, 2013, six channel video projection, two soundtracks, ninety six framed images. Below: Chantal Akerman, *A Voice in the Desert*, 2002, single channel video projection with sound. Both courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery



Above: Chantal Akerman, *Maniac Shadows*, 2013, six channel video projection, two soundtracks, ninety six framed images. Opposite: Chantal Akerman, *Femmes d'Anvers en Novembre*, 2008, 2 video projections, silent, colour. Both courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery





LONDON CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FESTIVAL



'The capital's most adventurous and ambitious festival of new music' (The Guardian) returned for its third year. In association with COS, LCMF 2015 offered a week of multi-disciplinary events exploring the best new music and performance from around the world in the epic surroundings of Ambika P3.

One major thread weaving its way throughout LCMF 2015 was a celebration of the American West Coast. They welcomed three legends of the Californian scene — Pauline Oliveros, Otis O'Solomon and Morton Subotnick — in a night dedicated to the experiments of this musically fertile state. Elsewhere, they presented the work of Los Angeles and San Francisco-based artists and musicians, Ryan Trecartin, Ellen Fullman and James Ferraro.



From their opening focus on London's collectives to the UK premiere of Stockhausen's *Pieta* to their exploration of Post-Internet Music, from their excavation of a forgotten modernist opera by Ezra Pound to the live set from Cairo's electro-chaabi virtuoso Islam Chipsy, LCMF 2015 was a bold and broad look at the musical state of play.

TOM CORBY & GAVIN BAILY FLOATING POINTS

An exhibition by Gavin Baily and Tom Corby which consisted of 3 screen-based projects and an installation set within Ambika P3’s underground galleries.

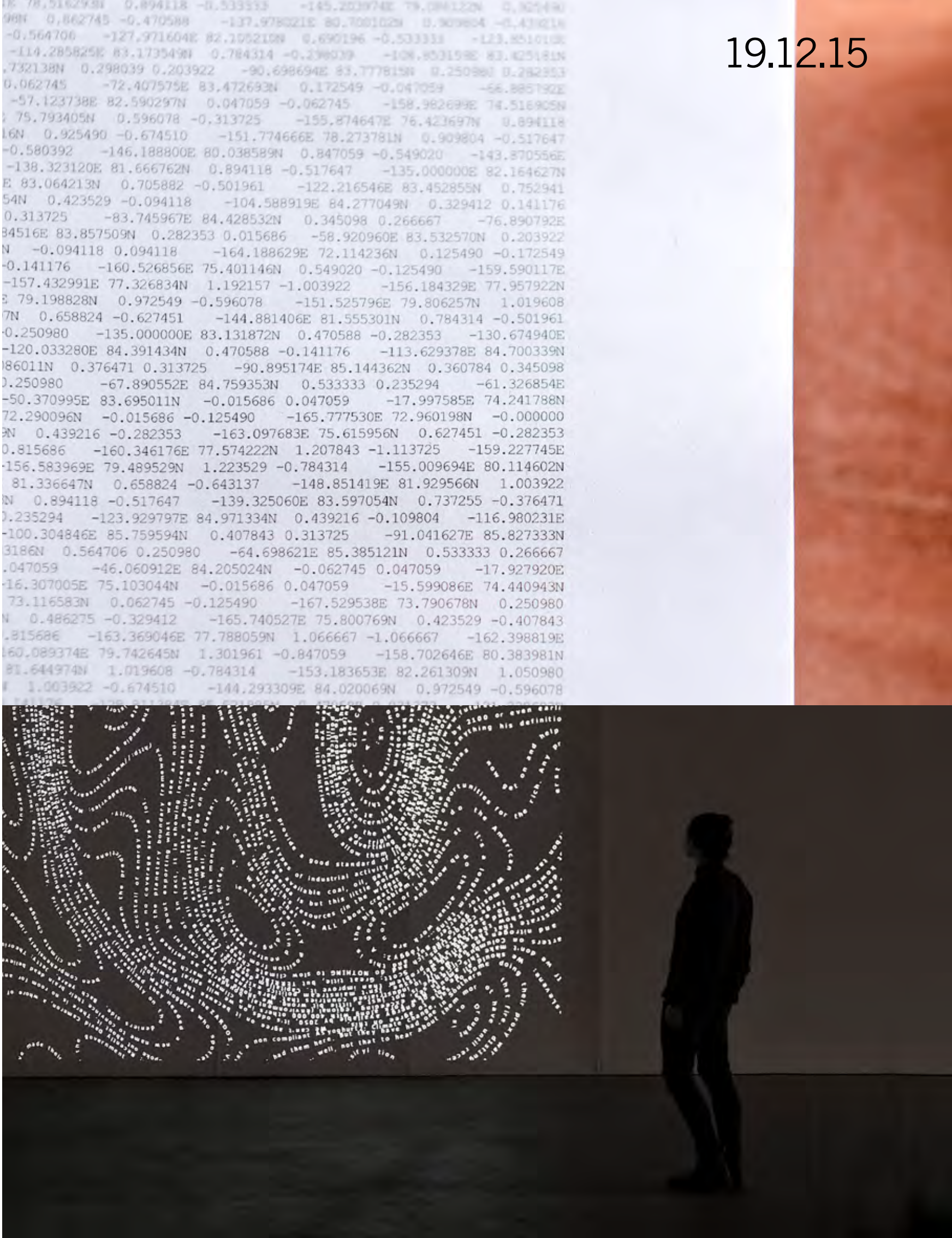
The northern Polar Studies (2015) and Minima, Maxima (2015) were premiered, while the Southern Ocean Studies (in collaboration with Dr Jonathan Mackenzie 2010), and Cyclone (2005 – 2015) were shown together for the first time. All 4 works employed various forms of climate or meteorological data to visually and physically condense the aleatory, hidden and the systemic aspects of sites and landscapes as large-scale data animation or installation.

Art has long found ways to make tangible the Earth’s exhalation of atmospheres and climates. this exhibition could have been seen as part of this tradition, but broke from it by bringing contemporary scientific technologies, data and institutions to bear showing how universal concepts of human relations with landscape are still pertinent in a contemporary context of accelerating climate change.

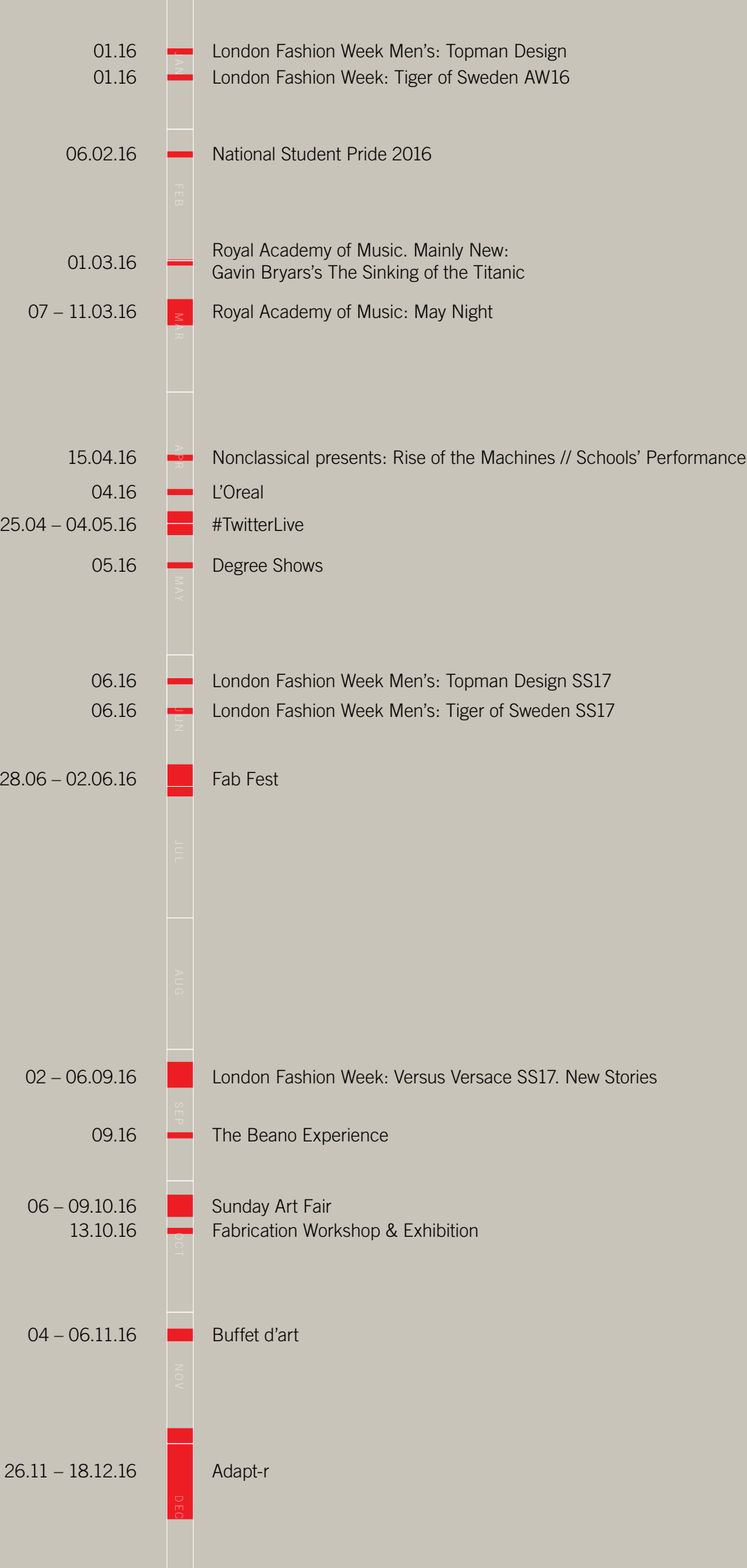
Additionally, the complex entanglements of the social, material, atmospheric and geographic explored throughout these works, extended a feel for landscape and also a sense of how time functions in it. Landscape through its laminations, layering and morphologies, was conceived in this work as a recording device that tracks the Earth’s changing energy signatures. this movement of time and matter reimagined environmental terrains as extended temporal forms resultant from long-term changes; which were proposed of as ‘deep time landscapes’.

This work was made in collaboration with the British Antarctic Survey, with special thanks to Nathan Cunningham, Dr Clare Tancell, Professor David Walton, Dr Beatrix Schlarb- Ridley, Professor Mike Meredith, and Pete Bucktrout. Funding for this work was from Arts Council England, the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Natural Environment Research Council, and the Centre for Research in Education, Art and Media at the University of Westminster.

Tom Corby and Gavin Baily
Tom Corby and Gavin Baily have been working together for nearly 20 years exploring intersections of data, geographies and environmental systems. their work has been exhibited in over 20 countries and has been the recipient of numerous awards. Reviews include Art Review, La Repubblica, Art Monthly and El País amongst others.



P3 2016





TOPMAN





NATIONAL STUDENT PRIDE

National Student Pride, in its 11th year, returned to London. Once again focussed around its daytime festival at Ambika P3, part of the University of Westminster's Marylebone campus, over 1500 LGBT students from across the UK took part in a weekend of festivities.

This year the focus was the difficult, but vital discussion of mental health, which disproportionately affects LGBT people.

www.studentpride.co.uk



ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC MAINLY NEW: GAVIN BRYARS' THE SINKING OF THE TITANIC

Gavin Bryars' *The Sinking of the Titanic* has a unique place in British music of the late twentieth century. Music broadcaster and writer Paul Morley curated an evening of sound and film installations around his interpretation of Bryars's iconic work.



01.03.16

ROYAL ACADEMY OPERA: MAY NIGHT NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

Rimsky-Korsakov's first folk-opera is a lyrical combination of the farcical, the romantic and the supernatural. Based on a story by Gogol, set in Little Russia in Whitsun-week, Levko and Ganna fall in love to a background of small-town politics and village traditions, with the ambivalent help of the restless spirits of the Unclean World. Royal Academy Opera continued its year 'on the road' in a venue a world apart from its traditional home, in spite of being only minutes away from the Academy. Ambika P3, was the dramatic location for Christopher Cowell's welcome directorial return to Royal Academy Opera, following his production of *Cendrillon* in 2013.

NON CLASSICAL



RISE OF THE MACHINES

Schools' Performance

Nonclassical hosted a schools' performance at Ambika P3 as part of its Rise of the Machines series. The centrepiece of the concert was the Fifth Movement of Gabriel Prokofiev's Concerto for Turntables and Orchestra, which is one of the BBC Ten Pieces, written to explore the use of electronics in classical music on a large scale. The other pieces in the concert displayed the use of machines (such as turntables) in classical music.

Evening Performance

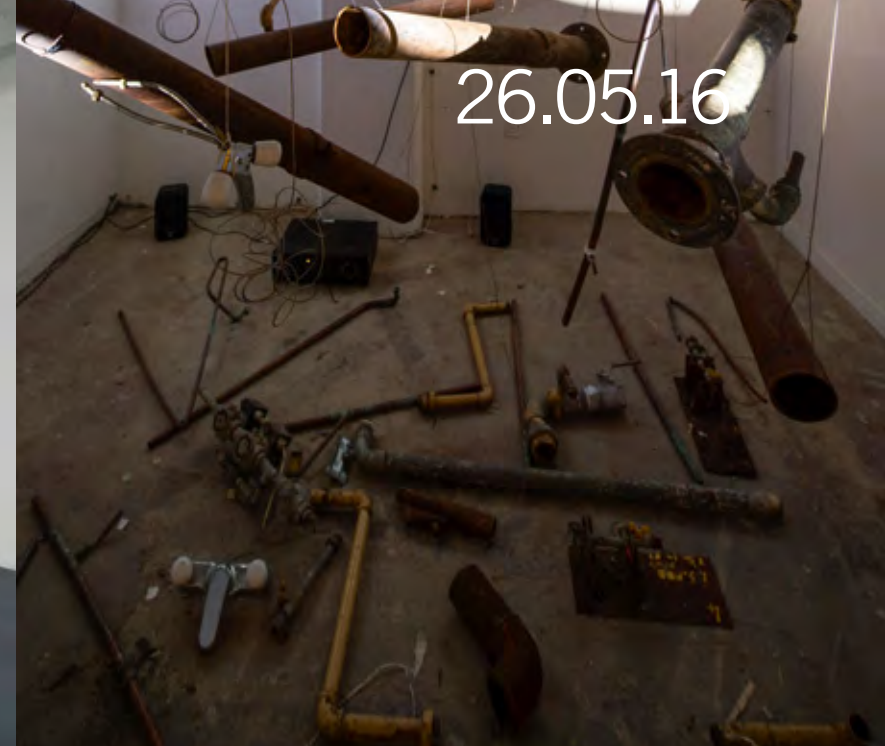
Nonclassical paired up with Southbank Sinfonia for a mini-series which explored the use of machines and mechanical influences on music. The highlight of the event was the UK premiere of Gabriel Prokofiev's Concerto for Trumpet, Percussion, Turntables and Orchestra with soloists Daniel de Gruchy-Lambert, Joby Burgess and DJ Mr Switch. Other works included the Fifth Movement of Gabriel Prokofiev's Concerto for Turntables and Orchestra, Alexander Mosolov's Iron Foundry and the Alarm Will Sound arrangements of electronic wizard Aphex Twin's Cock Ver. 10 and Blue Calx.



TWITTER

BA Fashion
BA Mixed Media Fine Art
BA Graphic Communication Design
BA Contemporary Media Practice

DEGREE SHOWS



12.06.16

FASHION WEEK

TIGER OF SWEDEN





FAB FEST

FAB FEST is a summer festival, celebrating design and making, with live music and entertainment. It was hosted this summer by the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment and the Fabrication Laboratory at the University of Westminster.

FAB FEST featured over 50 innovative cardboard pavilions designed and built by students from Westminster as well as by guest teams from India, China, USA, Italy and Turkey. Each team of five students was mentored by either an academic or a practicing professional from the field of architecture and the built environment.

The event was a celebration of design and making and generated an urban festival to start the summer, with family friendly events. FAB FEST included live performances from bands including performers from the University's Westminster School of Media, Arts and Design. It also featured a variety of making activities including cardboard robot-making, mask-making and sketching, with drop-in workshops for the public to enjoy. The afternoon finished with the presentation of the publically voted Festival Prize for the best pavilion.

The challenge for participants was to design and fabricate pavilions to facilitate this festival, making a mini 'Glastonbury-in-the-City'. The pavilions were made from cardboard and a range of other lightweight, cheap, recyclable materials, provided by our Fabrication Laboratory Westminster. Teams used hand tools or the Lab's digital fabrication machines to make the pavilions.

The festival closed with live music from Emmanuel Nwamadi, a University of Westminster student and finalist of BBC's The Voice 2015, a drinks reception and film screenings.

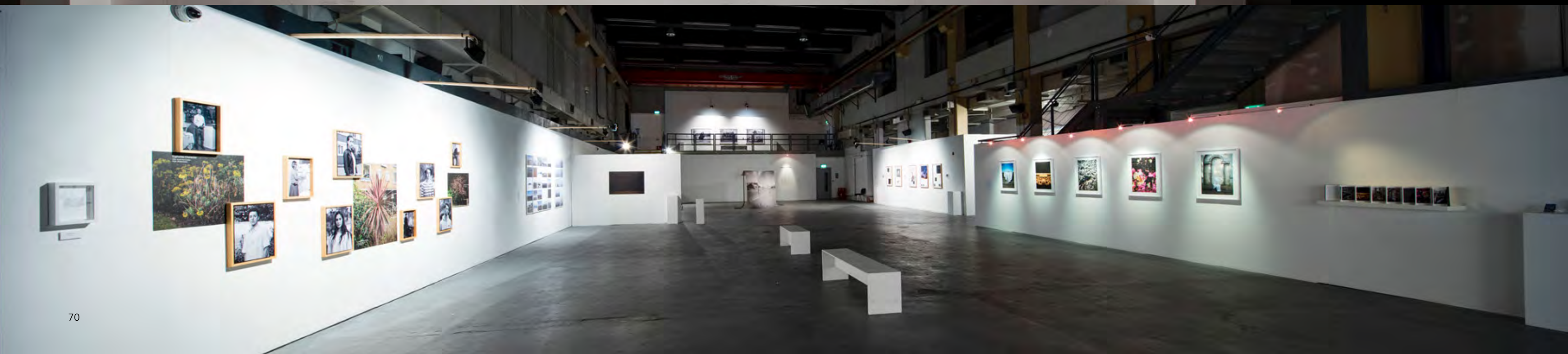
New Stories was the 2016 University of Westminster MA Photographic Studies exhibition. The show was an opportunity to view the work of the fifteen visual artists who have completed a period of intensive study on one of the leading photography courses in the UK. The course has established itself as a launch pad for many successful photographers, artists and curators and is proud of its well-structured yet open framework incorporating both academic study and photographic practice.

The graduating students exhibiting work were
Olga Bortkevich
Richard Collins
Jorge Luis Dieguez
Pippa Healy
Letitia Kamayi
Reka Komoli
Katie Longley
Rebecca McClelland
Thomas Nicolaou
Anthony Prevost
Blerim Racaj
Catherine Sanderson
Jennifer Wang
Lei Huang Yu
Ren Zhao

NEW STORIES

FICTION AND NON-FICTION; A DISCUSSION ON NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN NARRATIVE

with Lisa Barnard, Federica Chiocchetti and
Tom Seymour, chaired by Rebecca McClelland





24.09.16



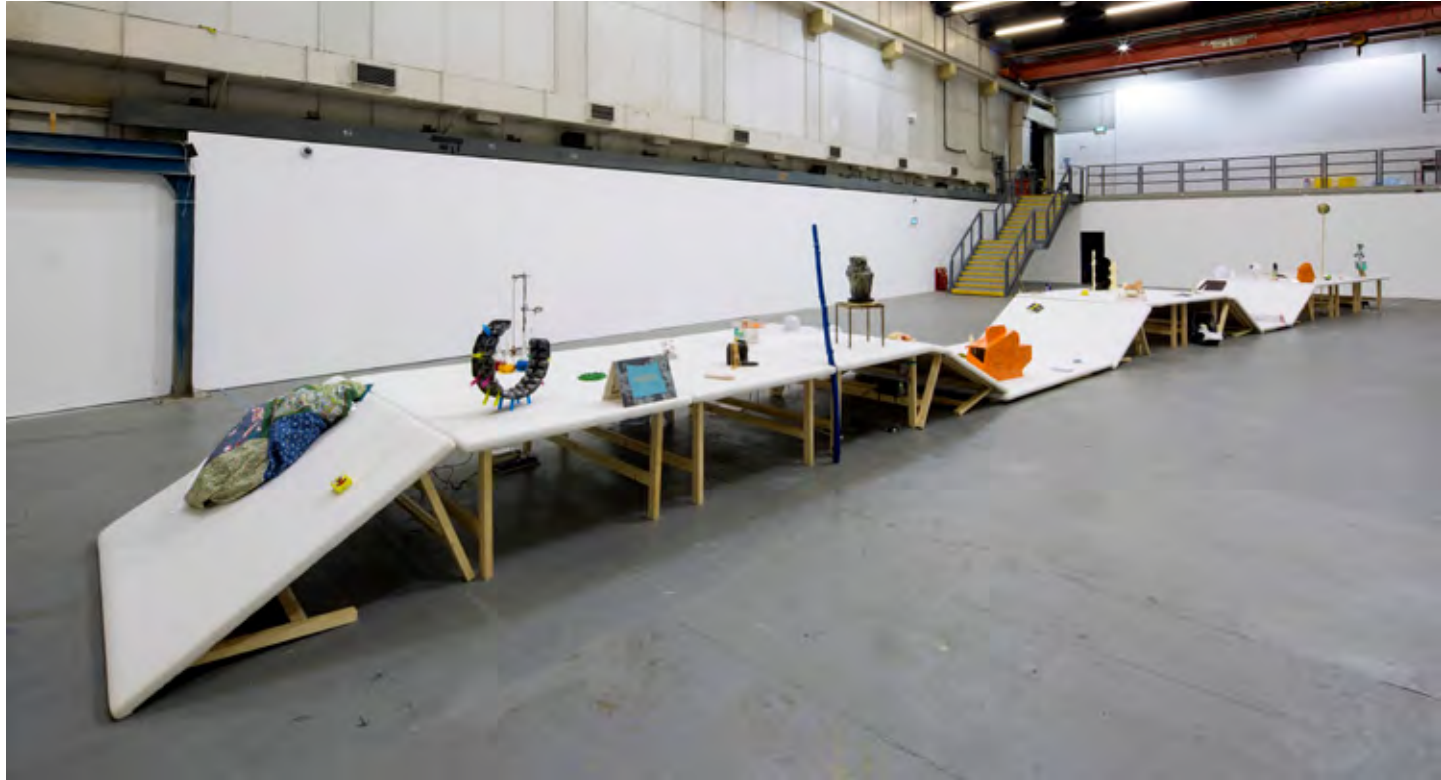


13.10.16

FABRICATION WORKSHOPS

The Fabrication Workshop brought together over 250 Westminster students, and tutors from across the Faculty. It gave students the opportunity to design, build and in a short period of time, exhibit a 1-to-1 installation in Ambika P3. The workshop developed skills in design through making and team working, while offering a rapid introduction to the Fabrication Lab and valuable practical experience on our analogue machine tools.

Students participated from first year BA Interior Architecture, first year BA Architecture, and second year BSc Architectural Technology, Construction Management and Building Engineering. The groups followed briefs developed by their tutors, culminating in a variety of built installations presented in a public exhibition in P3. The event was followed the next day by the documentation of the installation through photographs and sketches, as well as Crits and presentations.



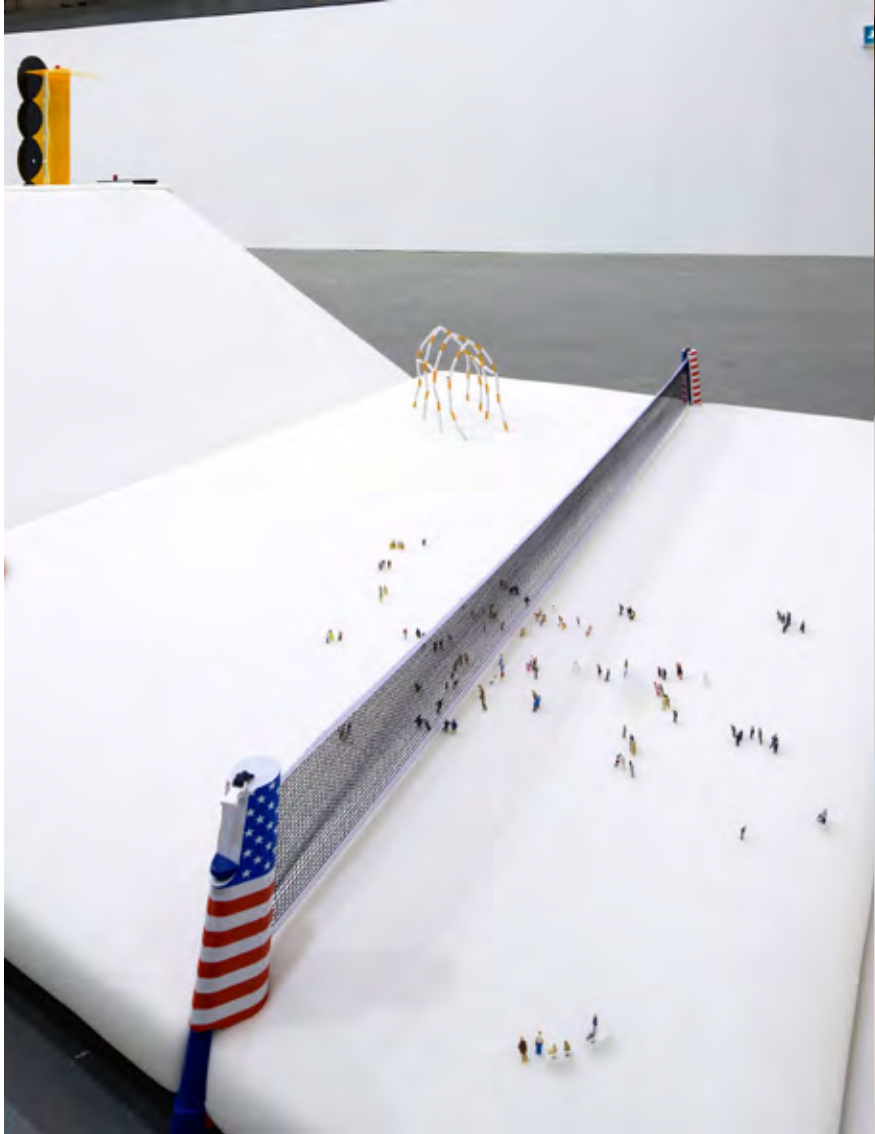
BUFFET D'ART

Buffet d'Art showcased an array of artists, all of whom have been invited to bring along a buffet size piece of work, to be perused on a plinth.

The show was a meleè of mismatched yet aspiring works, some with delusions of grandeur, others grubby with spillage and monotonous repetition, set to a medley of smooth and relaxing music, designed to whet the senses and heighten the experience of these buffet-inspired memories.

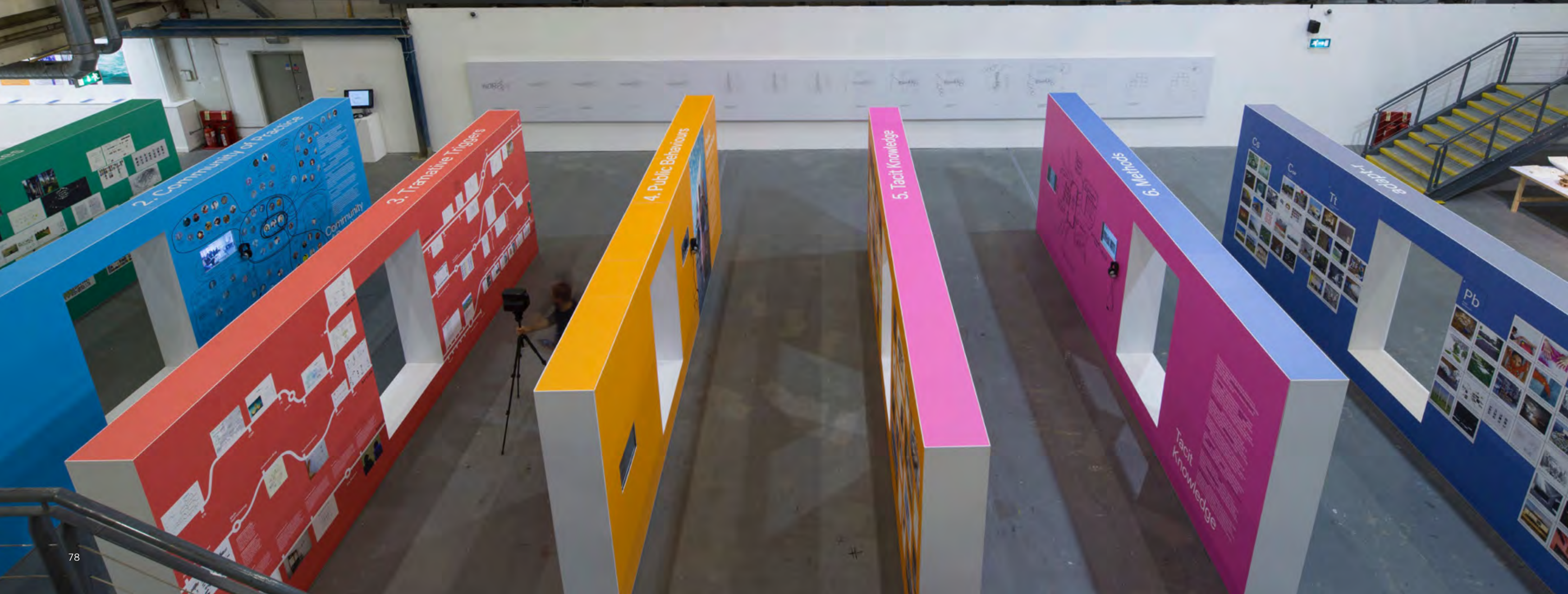
Participating artists
 Gustavo Ferro, Veronika Seifert, Rachel Lowther, Jo Addison, Doug Fishbone, Marcia Farquhar, Edwina Ashton, Keith Bowler, Gayle Chong Kwan, David Cotterrell, Lucy Joyce, Stuart Cumberland, Judith Dean, Dolanbay, David Donald, Kitty Finer, Adam Gillam, Louise Ashcroft, Luke Gottelier, Georgina Starr, Peggy Atherton, Eric Bainbridge, Maria Bartolo, Phil Allen, Katie Cuddon, Holly Hendry, Ian Kiaer, Renata Bandeira, Sharone Lifchitz, Justin Fitzpatrick, Mark Wilsher, Brendan Lynch, R J Hinrichsen, Annie Davey, Peter McDonald, Pete Owen, Des Hughes, Keith Wilson, Flora Parrott, Fabian Peake, Ben Joiner, Robert Rush, Raine Smith, Sarah Pucill, Kerry Stewart, Pip Thompson. Francis Upritchard, Demelza Watts, David Mabb

Curated by Ben Joiner, Peggy Atherton and Maria Bartolo
 (Westminster School of Media, Arts & Design)



ADAPT-r

What do architects, artists, and designers actually do? What inspires them? How do they make the leaps of imagination they need to break new ground? Where do they find their ideas? How do they develop, test and share them with each other? How do they know when something's going right?



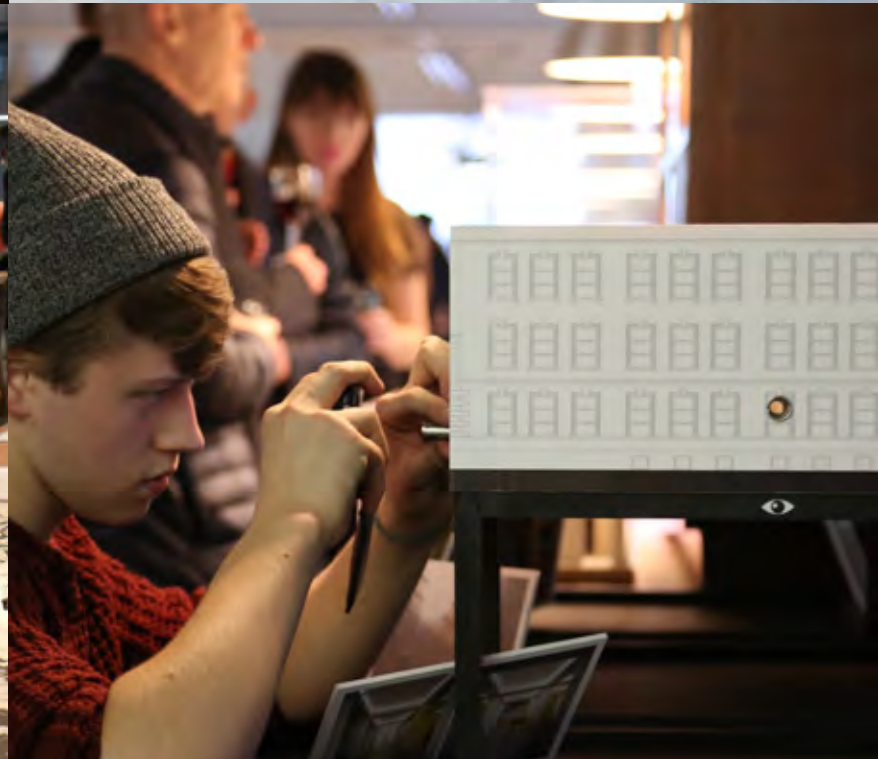
ADAPT-r, was a major exhibition exploring research processes of working artists, architects and designers – revealing the diverse approaches and how they do what they do. From digital designers to landscape architects, brand designers to design activists, painters to performance artists, and many different types of architects,

The exhibition concluded an EU funded research initiative and provides rare insights through 35 international practitioners from around the globe - John Brown, Koen Broucke, Alice Casey, Michael Corr, Cian Deegan, Federico Del Vecchio, Martí Franch Batllori, Dermot Foley, Eric Guibert, Karin Helms, Tom Holbrook, Chris Johnstone, Gitte Juul, Thierry Kandjee, Sam Kebbell, Ana Kre , CJ Lim, Hseng Tai Lintner, Petra Marguc, Colm Moore, Siobhán Ní Éanaigh, Steve Larkin, Karli Luik, Claudia Pasquero, Sébastien Penfornis, Anna Pla-Català, Marco Poletto, Irene Prieler, Deborah Saunt, Siv Helen Stangeland, Johannes Torpe, Alicia Velázquez, Michael Wildmann

ADAPT-r offered a rich terrain of work to explore. It is divided into distinct areas charting the different stages of discovery within the creative process. Individual exhibits in the Studio show work in progress and completion by 35 practitioners, whereas Rooms reveals cross views of working together. The Library includes books and discoveries, while the Garden will be the site of a daily programme of events, including discussions, performances and screenings.

ADAPT-r is a partnership of seven European Universities – Aarhus School of Architecture (Denmark), University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), KU Leuven Faculty of Architecture (Belgium), Estonia Academy of Arts (Estonia), Mackintosh School of Architecture – Glasgow School of Art (UK), RMIT Europe (Spain) & University of Westminster (UK). For more information see: <http://adapt-r.eu>

Curated and designed by Katharine Heron and Maria Veltcheva; graphic design by Paul Khera. This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 317 325.



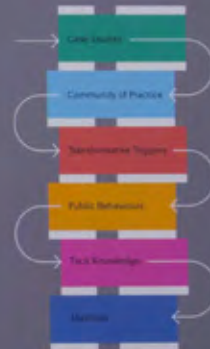


adapt-r

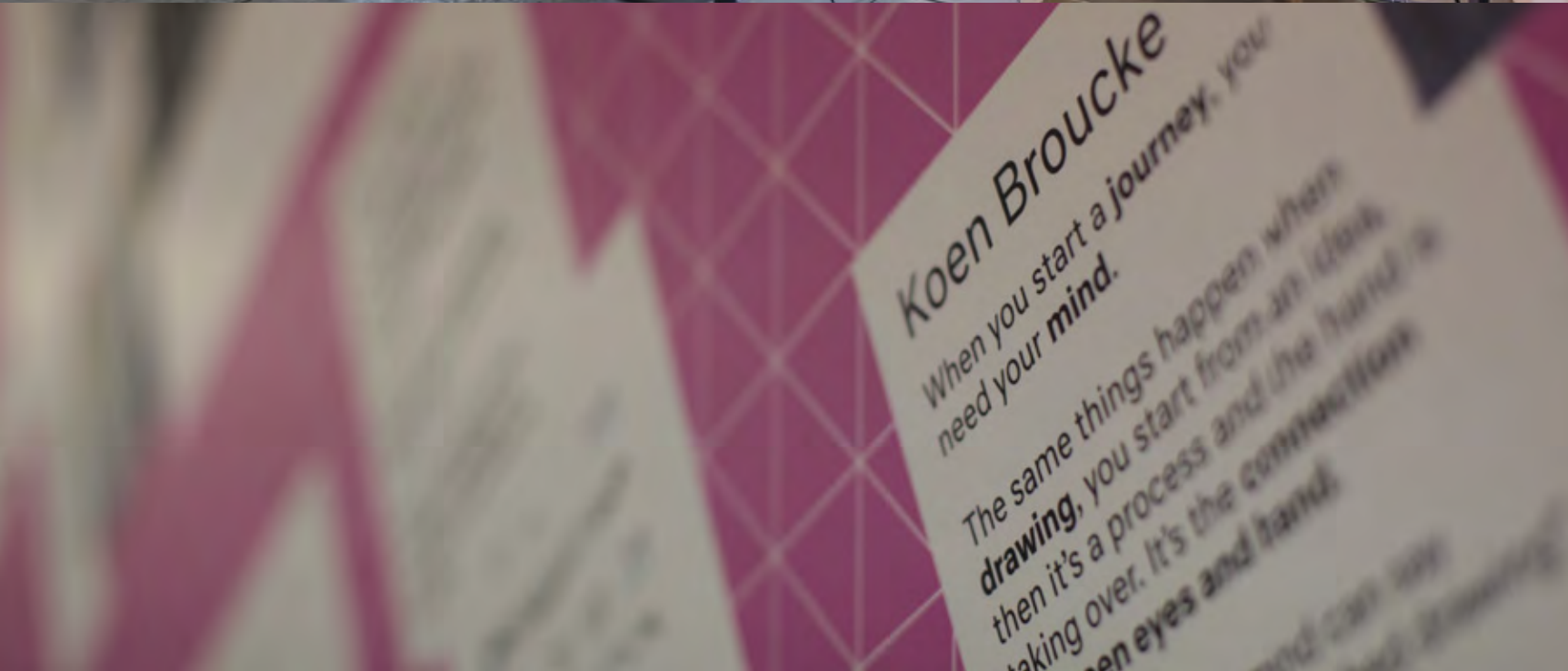
Architecture
Design and
Art
Practice
Training
-Research

Featuring 42 creative practitioners from
Aarhus School of Architecture
KU Leuven
University of Ljubljana
Estonia Academy of Arts
Glasgow School of Art
RMIT Europe
University of Westminster

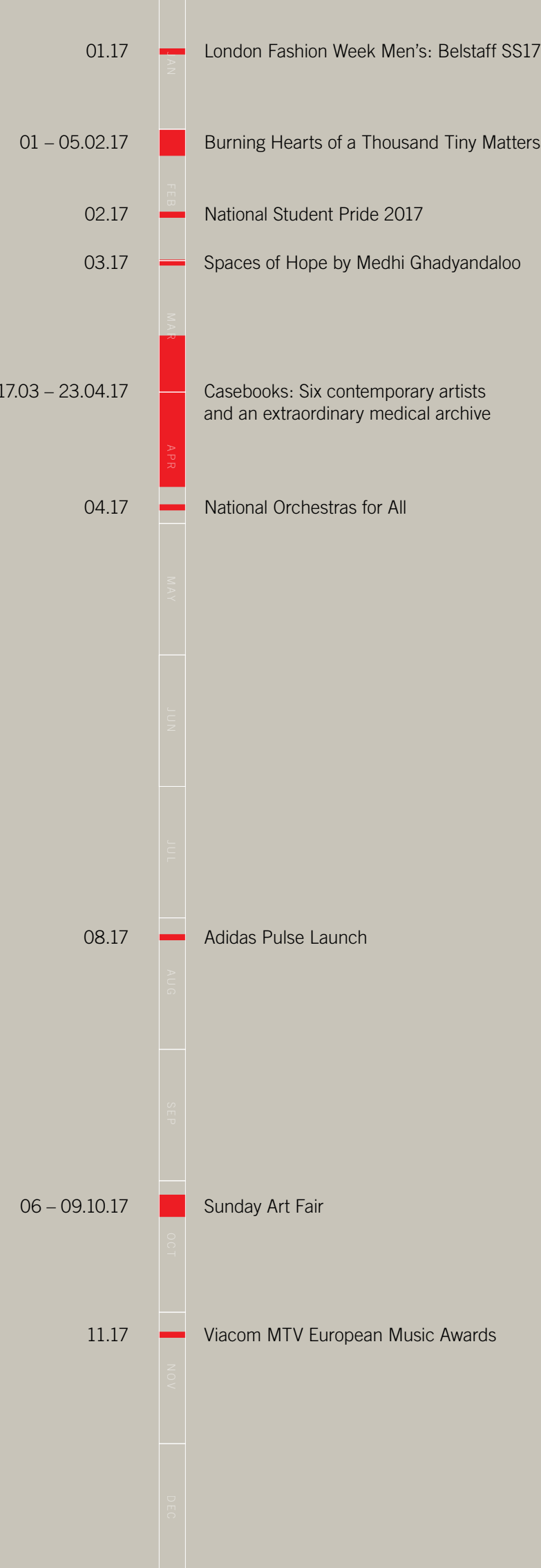
An exhibition
about research
processes

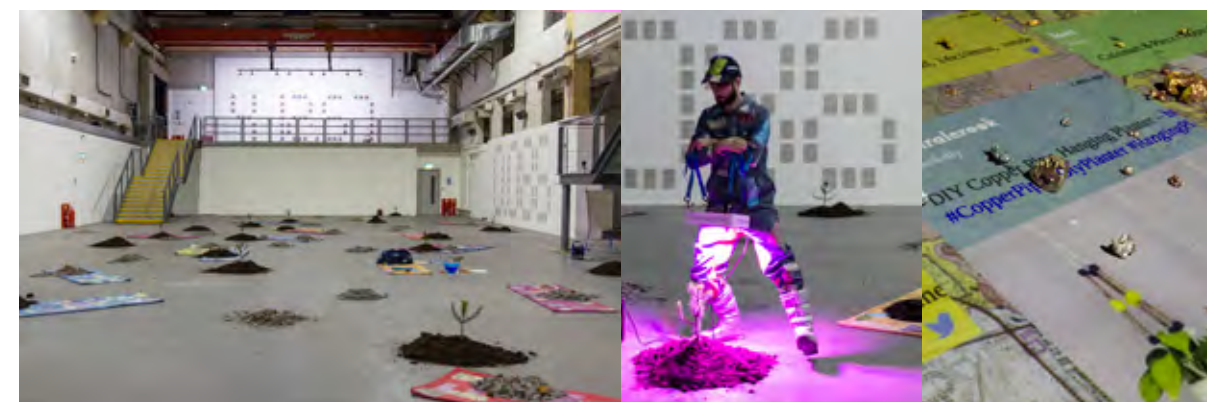






P3 2017





BURNING HEARTS OF A THOUSAND TINY MATTERS

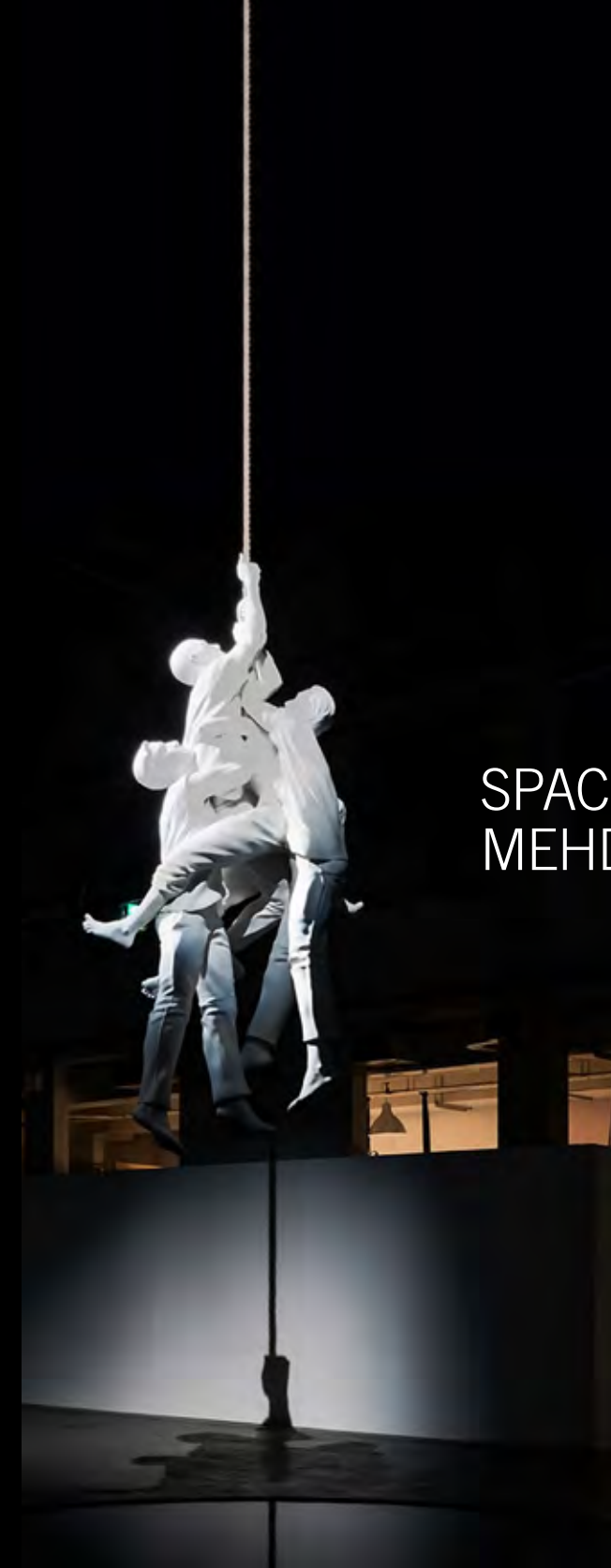
The earth beings in this space have lived through some rough times. There are histories of colonization, of explosions, of abuse, and of financial exploitation. Considering everything, the rocks resting on their yoga mattresses seem rather content. They seem to be in a better place now. As part of the work, the Welsh rocks in question will get to continue their journey to the City of London and London Metals Exchange, while the monkey puzzle plants will get a visit to the ICE Futures Europe, where carbon emissions are being traded. In the end the rocks will travel to Finsbury Square and stay there to observe the happenings of the City. The monkey puzzle seedlings will be planted on Parys Mountain, the home of the rocks.

mirko's practice stems from the idea of a posthuman eco-aesthetics, from a poetics of multispecies love and desire, and from a critique of capitalism. Intra-action is a term coined by feminist quantum physicist Karen Barad. By intra-action Barad means the intermingling of the abilities of people, things and matter to act. When bodies intra-act, the ability to act emerges within a relationship to another body or bodies. The space of burning hearts of a thousand tiny matters appears as a space for exactly this process. All of our bodies are passing through this space, coexisting here for a while in order to meet each other, and continue our being in other spaces.

Elina Suoyrjö



mirko nikoli with araucaria araucanas,
carbon-dioxide, copper, Mynydd Parys,
Duško Jelen, Isidora Spasovi Lebovi
and Tuomas A. Laitinen



SPACES OF HOPE MEHDI GHADYANDALOO

Howard Griffin Gallery presented Spaces of Hope, a much anticipated exhibition of new work from Iranian artist Mehdi Ghadyanloo occupying the walls of this epic site with a new body of large-scale paintings alongside an ambitious sculptural installation, opening up the conceptual space of the artist's paintings into the three-dimensional space of the gallery for the first time. Visitors to the exhibition were disoriented by vast, empty landscapes dominated by architectural forms. An empty spiral staircase rises from a dark chasm in the floor through a monumental stone room, falling just short of an oculus with warm light streaming through it. A vast and unending plain was punctured by a void carved into the ground, with groups of people descending down stairs into the abyss. In a utopian scene, the empty tower blocks of contemporary Tehran are displaced, inhabiting a borderless unending plain. A single cloud hovers above a barren, desert landscape. Figures huddle together and walk towards a light emanating from some unknown source. These are the paintings of Spaces of Hope – beautiful, beguiling and ominous.

CASEBOOKS



CASEBOOKS

Six contemporary artists and an extraordinary medical archive

Jasmina Cibic, Federico Díaz, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Rémy Markowitsch, Lindsay Seers, Tunga

Ambika P3 and the Casebooks Project at the University of Cambridge presented CASEBOOKS, a major exhibition engaging with one of the largest surviving sets of medical records in history.

The Casebooks Project is editing the manuscripts of two seventeenth-century English astrologer-physicians Simon Forman and his protégé Richard Napier. The manuscripts document some 80,000 medical consultations, and are testament to the preoccupations of patients with questions of health, disease, fertility, stability and their place within wider natural and supernatural schemes.

The CASEBOOKS exhibition presented six new commissions spanning sculpture, video and audio installation, live performance, robotics and artificial intelligence. The Casebooks Project worked closely with each artist to establish resonances between the artists' own work and historically acute questions about the nature of the casebooks, the kind of medical practice they represented and their significance for our understanding of medicine and natural knowledge. Ambika P3 engaged in a curatorial dialogue with each artists to encourage both an encounter with its vast post industrial space and the use of an original and complementary ecology of media.

Jasmina Cibic's new work, *Unforeseen Foreseens*, was a site-specific 12m long corridor installation fusing sculpture and performance, and alluding to the relationships between astrology, power and architecture. Federico Díaz presented a trade fair booth of a fictional initiative *Blg Light*, offering a glimpse into a possible future of merging biological and technological scientific progress with social changes through augmented techno-shamanistic rituals. Lynn Hershman Leeson's *Real-Fiction Botnik* was a 3D holographic Artificial Intelligence bot with a brain shaped by seventeenth-century astrological consultations, who was able to offer on-the-spot personal predictions. *The Casebooks Calf* by

Rémy Markowitsch was a large-scale sculpture of a calf made of the same calfskin as the bindings of the casebooks, and from which emanate readings selected from the original seventeenth-century consultations. Seers' work *Mental Metal* considered, through Simon Forman's writings, how elements of contemporary life have passed beyond causal, materialist/mechanistic newtonian concepts to quantum speculations that have a hint of the supernatural about them. Following a method of correspondences as Forman did in his astral cosmology Seers' work was also shaped by affinities and neoplatonic ideals of unification. *Me, You and the Moon*, a recent work chosen for the exhibition by the late artist Tunga, is a monolithic sculptural constellation of clay, rock and organic materials symbolising alchemy, astrology and the senses.

The CASEBOOKS exhibition curated by Dr Michael Mazière supported by Curatorial Advisory Committee: Alanna Heiss (Chair), Katharine Heron, Natalie Kaoukji, Lauren Kassell, Sam Thorne and David Thorp. The exhibition was a collaboration between the University of Westminster and the University of Cambridge. The exhibition was funded by the Wellcome Trust as part of a Provision for Public Engagement for the Casebooks Project. Additional funding was provided by the University of Westminster; Pro Helvetia; Czech Centre London; Pembroke College, Cambridge; Department of History and Philosophy of Science, Cambridge.

The Casebooks Project is based at the University of Cambridge in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, and led by Dr Lauren Kassell, Director of the Casebooks Project and Dr Natalie Kaoukji, Research.

Lindsay Seers
Mental Metal, 2017
Three channel video projection on modified satellite dishes with audio





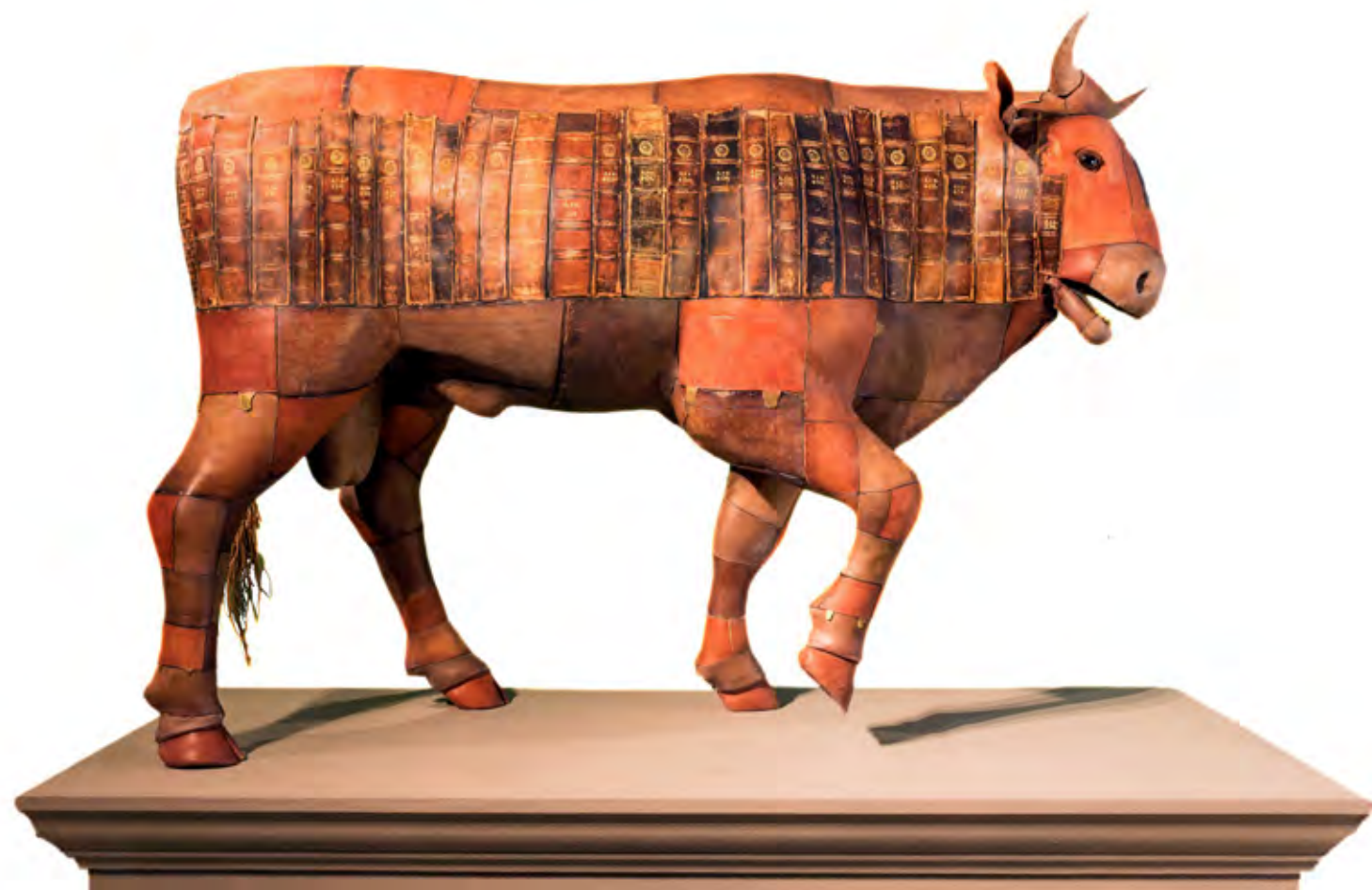
Lynn Hershman Leeson
Venus of the Anthropocene, 2017
Modified programming, modified sculpture, painted body parts, mirror, vanity table.



Tunga
'Eu, Você E A Lua' ('Me, You And The Moon'), 2015
 Approximate area and weight: 700 x 500 x 320cm / 4.500kg
 Iron, steel, petrified wood, plaster, terracota, parabolic mirrors, leather straps, resin,
 quartz crystals, amber essence, zinc oxide paste.







Rémy Markowitsch
The Casebooks Calf, 2017
 Sculpture: 150x40x105 [cm], styrofoam, epoxy resin covering, covered by
 printed calfleather, embedded loudspeakers, control module.
 Pedestal: 180x70x80 [cm], wood, paint.

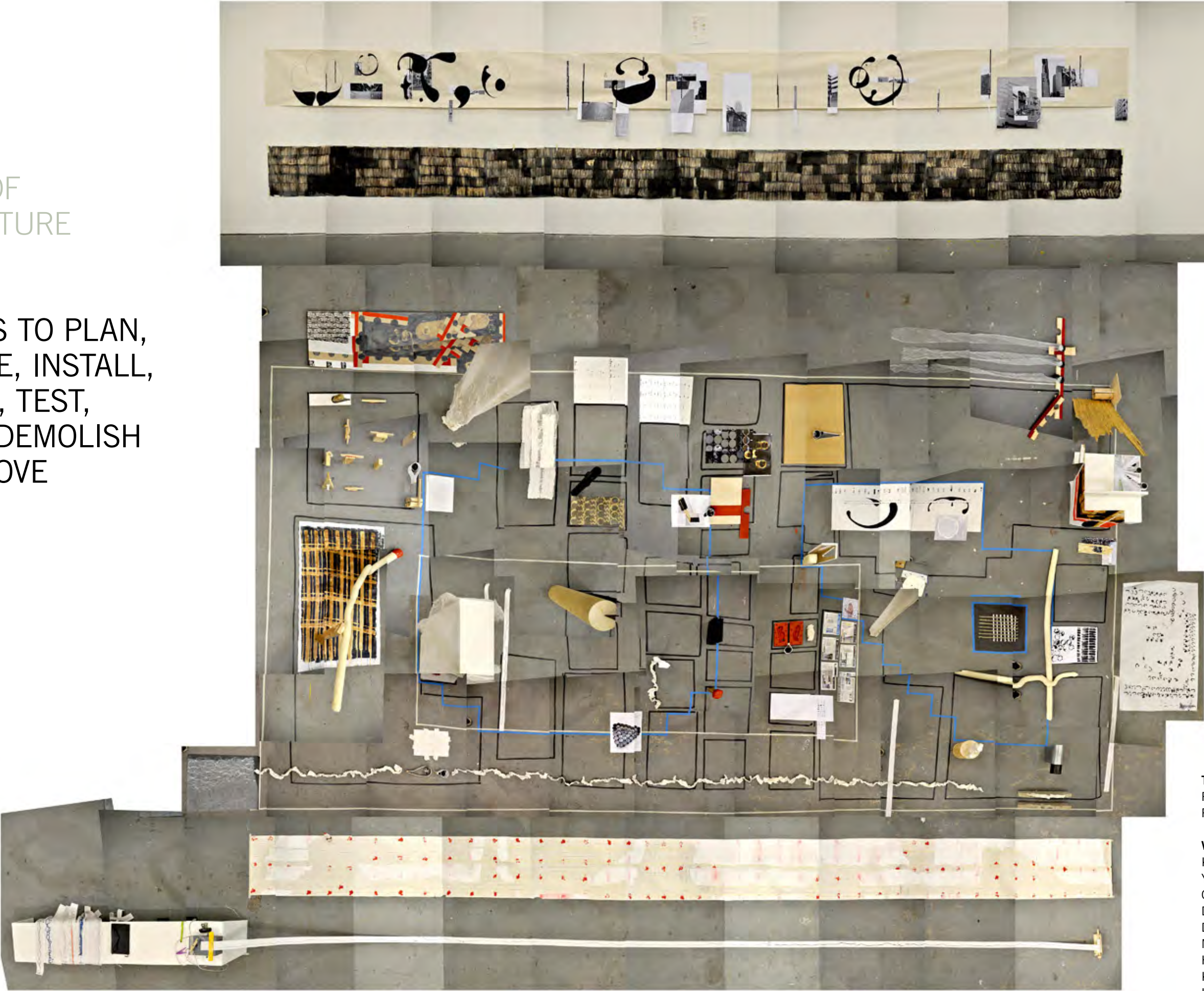


Federico Díaz
BIG LIGHT Space of Augmented Suggestion, 2017
Robot performative installation, parametrical programming, augmented and artificial nature, rapid prototyping ceramics, glass, metal, water, pigment, sound, vinyl, animation and projection

WHAT HAS BEEN
DAMAGED AND
DESTROYED IS NOW
REPLACED AND BECOMES
A PROJECTION IN THE BIG
LIGHT AUGMENTED SPACE

MASTER OF
ARCHITECTURE
DS15

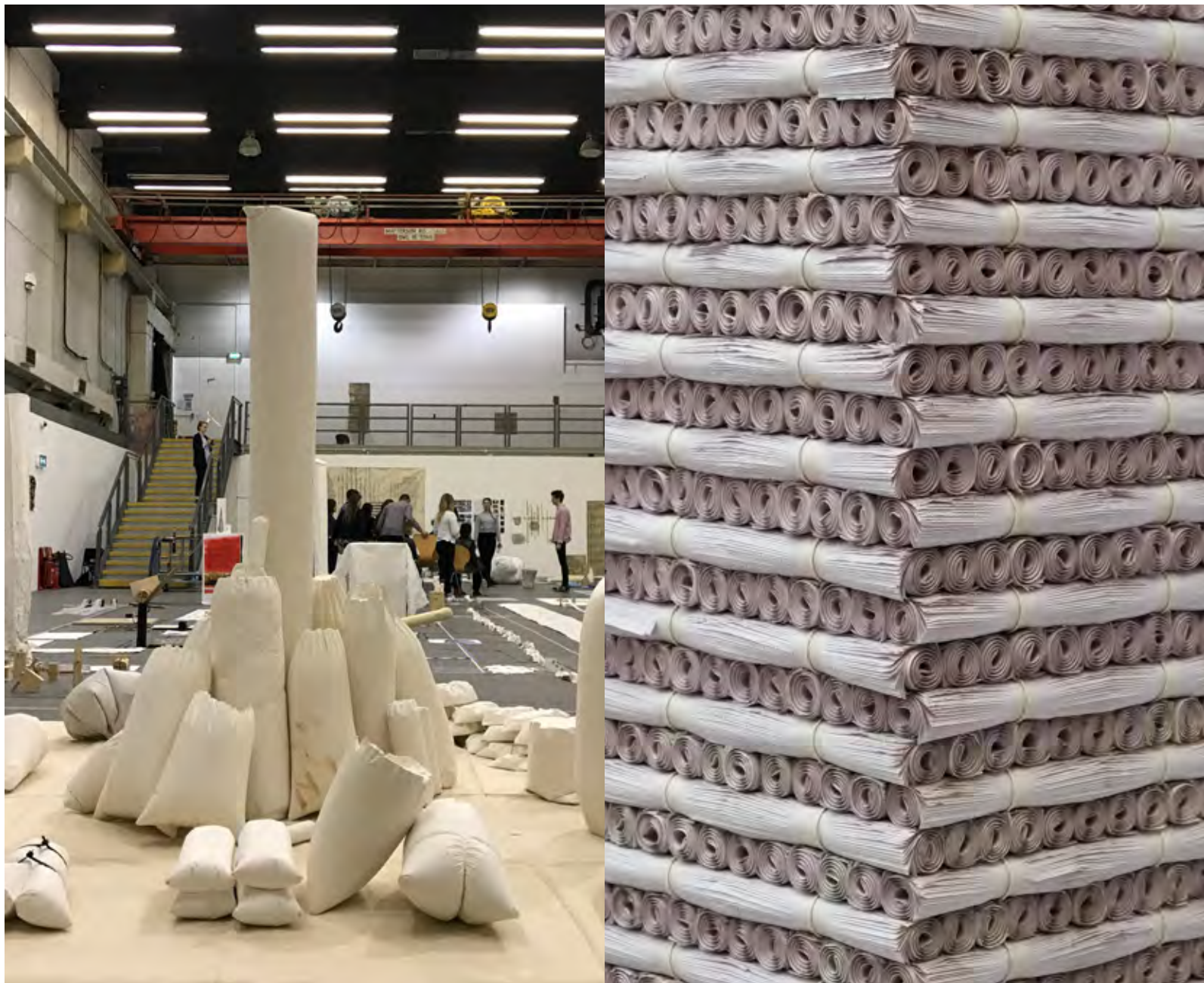
24 HOURS TO PLAN,
ASSEMBLE, INSTALL,
PERFORM, TEST,
RECORD, DEMOLISH
AND REMOVE



TUTORS
Professor Kester Rattenbury,
Professor Sean Griffiths.

VISITING CRITICS
Kate Heron, Jo Melvin,
Yuki Sumner, Mel Dodd,
Owen Hopkins, Tom Bower,
Dusan Decermivic,
Doug Spencer, Giles Smith,
Molly de Courcy Wheeler,
Harry Anthony Meacock,
Kate McTiernan,
Harry Charrington,
Michael Maziere.

STUDENTS
Elise Aldén, Rhian Bower,
Charlie Cullen, Matt Deeming,
Benjamin Ellis, Riccardo
Fregoni, Pippa Hale-Lynch,
Paulina Huukari, Agnieszka
Kowalska, Ciaran Linane,
Max Martin, Alexandra
McCluskey, Sean Morrison,
Jennifer Nguyen, Dominic
Norman, Alex Ngai, Conor
Sheenan, Angus Smith,
Alexia Soteriou, Dan Rymer
Trenholme, Dan Wu



Taking the opportunity offered by an unexpected cancellation in the P3 exhibition schedule, MArch architecture students from Design Studio 15 seized the last-minute opportunity to take over the whole of P3 for 24 hours to plan, assemble, install, perform, test, record, demolish and remove large scale versions of their work, turning a regular student 'crit' day into an astonishing one-day working exhibit of work in progress.

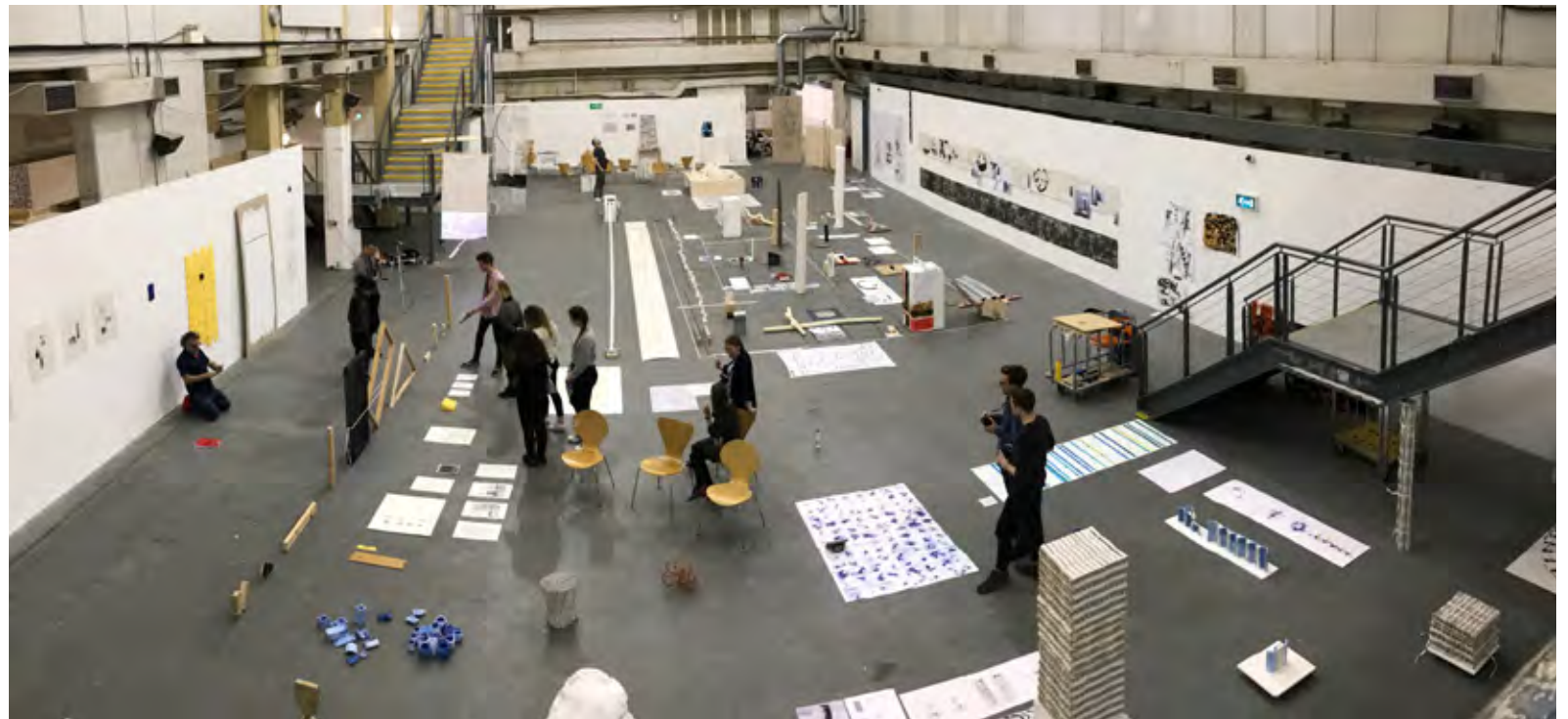
DS15 is a teaching studio led by Professors Kester Rattenbury and Sean Griffiths. For the last five years, the studio has been exploring the role of chance in architectural projects. Based on the random composition methods used by the seminal musician John Cage, the students have been making architectural 'projects' – by chance.

Using the I Ching book of ancient Chinese wisdom in the manner used by Cage, the studio set themselves (and each other) random tasks to make, draw, perform or do. This generated remarkable 'chance' works, often large scale, which students gradually develop, assemble and test, gradually assembling the work into a more-or-less coherent 'architectural project', in what seems to be

an X-ray of all architectural teaching projects; exploring how and why we teach architecture in the strange ways we do.

The project develops key architectural skills of improvisation, critical judgement, and the ability to assemble change situations into a coherent whole. It challenges ideas about finished objects, about individual and collective creativity, about the status of drawings as both instructions to build and as things in themselves.

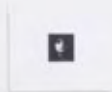
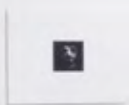
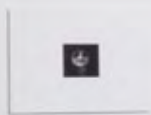
And it explores the crucial role played by chance in all architectural projects, where things never work out as planned, and shows how tutors devise unpredictable challenges to test and develop our own skills to develop, use and understand the world in new ways, using essential skills of improvisation, development, post-rationalisation and critical judgment, working outwards from the randomly made object to their own architectural project.



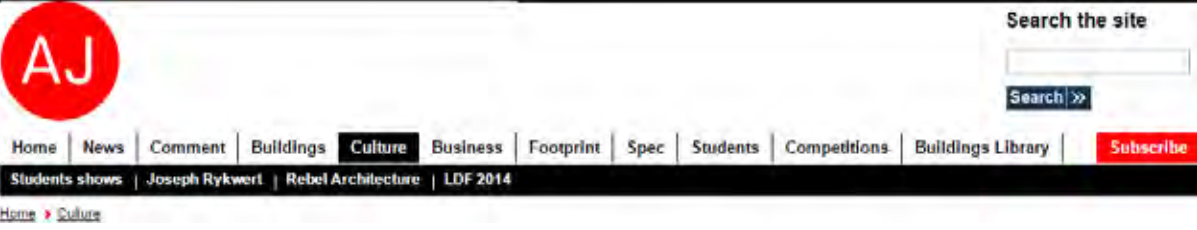


MA PHOTO



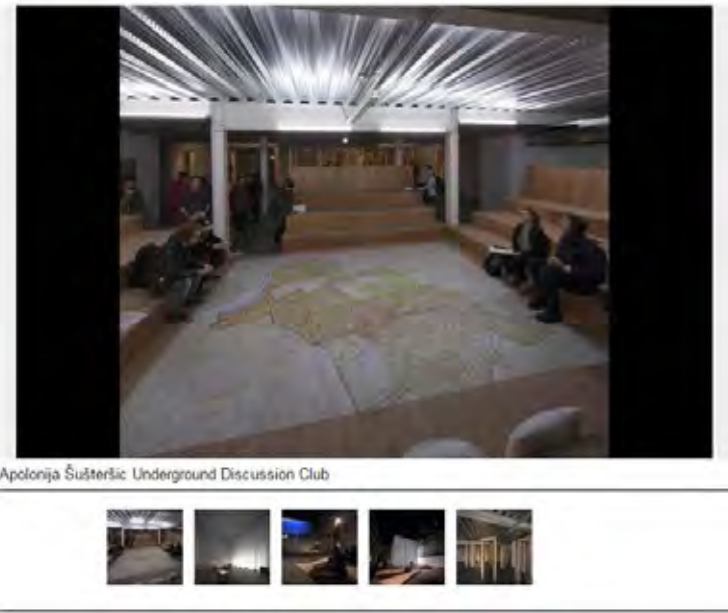


SELECTED PRESS



Review: Potential Architecture exhibition

24 MARCH, 2015 BY OWEN PRITCHARD



Owen Pritchard discovers a brave architecture exhibition that tests the limits

This week a new show opened at the Ambika P3 space in the basement of Westminster University. *Potential Architecture* presents four site-specific works by architects from Russia, Norway, Slovenia and the UK.

Alexander Brodsky, Sean Griffiths, Joar Nango and Apolonija Sustersic are presented as architect-artists. Each has created a new piece of work that aims to 'cultivate new ideas and alternative approaches around the built environment, their commissions indirectly responding to a growing critique of property

A number of shows have presented architecture under the auspices of art with success over the past decade

The four pieces hang together loosely: Sustersic has created a temporary debating space; Nango has explored his Sami heritage to develop a prototype for a cinema; Brodsky's clay models are contained in a plastic cube; whereas Griffiths's installation is a strange construction of levitating door frames and mirrors. Combined, the works create a complex landscape and, reflecting on the questions posed so succinctly in the show literature, it is not always clear how the intriguing exhibits relate to one another.

A number of shows have presented architecture under the auspices of art with success over the past decade. Three in particular spring to mind – *Psycho Buildings* at the Hayward in 2008, *1:1 Architects Build Small Spaces* at the V&A in 2010 and last year's *Sensing Spaces* at the Royal Academy. In each case architecture was presented in a gallery as subject, not as facsimile or representation. It was architecture that responded to context but was too easily interpreted and discussed as a piece of art.

The works on show at Ambika P3 are a provocation that, while not as glamorous or as neatly executed as the shows that preceded it at those more established institutions, does not allow the visitor to reduce the complexity of architecture to a decorative art.

While the show has its flaws, it is exactly the kind of exhibition that should thrive in a space like Ambika P3. If architecture can draw in the masses when on show at Exhibition Road or Burlington House, then it is the more nimble and critical institutions which can be brave enough to try to test the limits of what this kind of show can achieve.

Potential Architecture at the Ambika P3 gallery, University of Westminster, London NW1. Runs until 19 April 2015

The matter of life and death

A show of the late Chantal Akerman's films is beautiful, intimate, bleak and at times overwhelming

Laura Cumming
@LauraCummingArt

Chantal Akerman: NOW
Ambika P3, London NW1, until 6 Dec

The Belgian-born film-maker Chantal Akerman died in Paris last month at the age of 65. According to *Le Monde*, she took her own life. Shocked obituaries have appeared all over the world, with the result that many more people now know about Akerman's death than her life's work, which is extraordinarily diverse, original and inventive. Her filmography includes adaptations of Proust and Conrad, conventional comedies starring William Hurt, documentaries, biopics, travelogues and political essays, as well as wildly radical departures such as the film that made her name in 1975, *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*, a mesmerising portrait of a young widow turned prostitute frequently described as a masterpiece of European cinema.

No doubt there will be lifetime surveys to come, although the ICA has only just finished screening 40 films over two years. In the meantime, there are plentiful DVDs and YouTube clips. But these mainly present her cinema films, rather than the strange and pioneering visions Akerman unleashed in art galleries down the decades, seven of which are now on show at Ambika P3 in a gathering that is beautiful, intimate, bleak and very nearly overwhelming.

If you have tears, prepare to shed them in front of the very first film in the gallery, made when Akerman was 21. *In the Mirror* shows a young girl inspecting herself in the looking glass. We see her from behind, as well as from the front in reflection. It is the classic disparity. She sees

somebody with no waist, awkward ears, too small a head and too many blemishes, as she declares, we see a ravishingly beautiful young woman. The viewer is filled with tenderness for this child who can scarcely see how lovely she is in all her ruthless self-criticism, asserting "her right to be the author of herself", to quote the 70s rhetoric. The inner-outer split grows increasingly poignant.

It is a short piece for Akerman – a few minutes, compared to *Jeanne Dielman*, which unfolds over more than three hours. But the subsequent films here amount to a prolonged immersion in the lives of untold women. In Shanghai, as dusk falls, waitresses begin their ceaseless circling of the city's cafes, passing to and fro in the sickly glow before Akerman's locked-off camera. On the sidewalks of New York, immigrant street sellers, surreptitiously viewed through a doorway, somehow keep their spirits up as the world walks on by. In Arizona, on the Mexican border, a huge screen shows what amounts to a haunted road movie – Akerman's car streaming through the desert to a place with no name, which neither the film nor the wetbacks she is commemorating on the soundtrack will ever reach. It is a meditation on all those nameless migrants who would one day clean the houses on the other side if only they hadn't suddenly, and mysteriously, disappeared. Nobody ever makes it home.

The narrative voice in each case is Akerman's own – lyrical and low, casting its own kind of music over these enthralling observations of other people's lives. She is more than director, more than auteur, frequently appearing in her own scenes. In some profound sense, each work is a self-portrait by other means, shot through with a burning appreciation of life – and a fierce sense of death, most piercingly that of her mother.

Nelly Akerman survived Auschwitz, and the relationship between mother

and daughter, precious and deep, turns upon that anguished miracle. Nelly never speaks of it, Chantal always wonders about it; and they do eventually come at it very obliquely in Akerman's *No Home Movie* (with its double meaning), in conversations recorded in the older woman's Brussels flat in the months before her death.

That is a cinema film; at Ambika P3 you can see *Maniac Shadows*, a five-part installation that incorporates fragments from both women's lives, juxtaposed with a wall of photographs showing women on the tube, in the restroom, in the lobby – strange places where they are neither at work nor at home; a no woman's land. And in another room (metaphorically, as well as literally) is the filmed portrait of Nelly: an old woman now, waiting for the cleaning lady to come but not quite sure if it is today or tomorrow that this will happen, struggling to answer the telephone, to read, move or converse; a woman living in a vagueness she can no longer gather into any meaning, structure or purpose. It is a tremendous and harrowing portrait, Akerman's voiceover caressing her mother's fragile shadow on screen.

And the accompanying photographs gradually take on another significance, apparently imitating the vagaries of memory. Here was something (or someone) important at that very snapshot moment, its meaning now lost. What on earth was it that mattered so much?

Maniac Summer shows Akerman alone in her Manhattan flat, extremely anxious – or is it the film that shudders with nerves? Time is ticking away on screen. In August 2009, 8pm and the artist is smoking incessantly. Barack Obama appears on television, blinking, uncertain, not yet presidential. Street scenes show an eerie underpass, cars flashing past in the growing dusk; while the camera in the flat remains static, like another piece of furniture. In the park, in black and white,

there is a sense of anticipation, a frisson something like the breeze shivering through the grass in Antonioni's *Blow-Up*. Then the scene shifts into colour and the fear increases. All of these works are concerned, to some degree, with different kinds of film stock, colour, angle and technique – with picture-making at its most formal, but also dramatic. Akerman is capable of filming net curtains, lifting slightly, as if they were weeping.

One of the most famous works here, *D'est* (1993), is a 24-strong assembly of monitors showing figures from her travels through Eastern Europe. Men and women wait by the road, black forms in the fog, or huddle with their few possessions in the dim-lit underground. Visions of figures trudging through white winters, as if in war or its aftermath, pass across these screens.

It is an argument against uniformity – each face is held by our eyes, looking back at us in turn – but Akerman's words are almost more compelling. If you didn't know her work, you might think this was a fiction, a Beckett narrative accompanied by pictures. There are only two things, she says – life, and not.

Akerman's final work, *NOW*, was an extreme departure: five screens showing the desert hurtling towards and around the viewer, to a soundtrack of pure but muffled violence. In the chaos of rambling, shooting, shattering noise, the ear struggles to pick out birdsong above the raging horror. Variations of speed, stock and colour suggest vast worlds in themselves, and the trauma to eye and ear is overpowering, although not a single word is spoken.

In *D'est*, Akerman talked of trying to create what was for her a primal scene – a flickering between life and death, the instant before being snatched from this world. There is no doubt that she achieved it here.

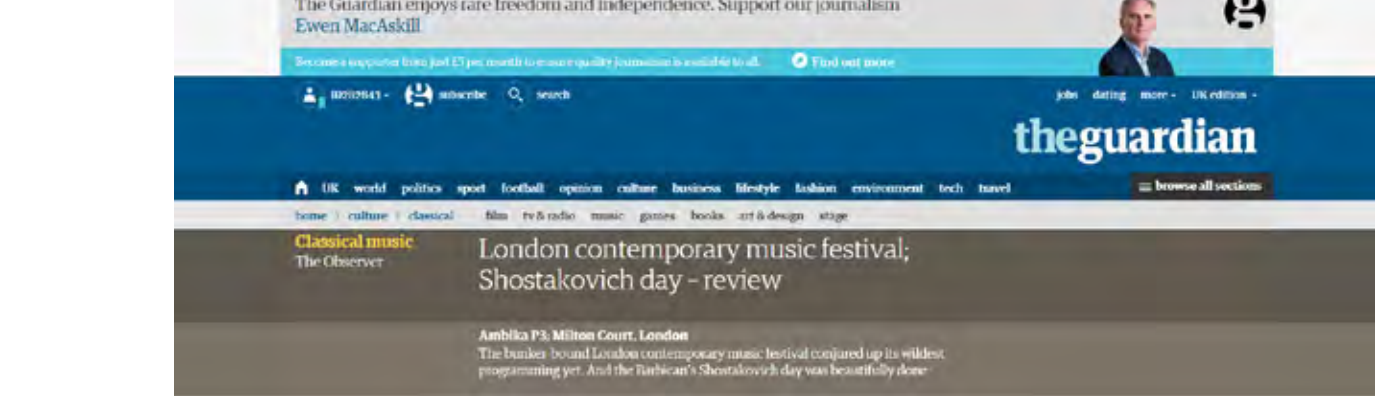
THREE MORE TO SEE...

Al Weiwei
Royal Academy, London; until 13 Dec He may be more famous than his art, but this is a monumental sequence of installations and sculptures.

Giacometti: Pure Presence National Portrait Gallery, London; until 10 Jan Sixty portraits, mainly sculptures, of friends, relatives and the thin man himself.

Turner prize 2015
Tramway, Glasgow; until 17 Jan Assemble: Bonnie Campbell, Nicole Wermers and Janice Kerbel, with Assemble current frontrunner for the prize on 7 December.

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Open access - Serge Yvelin at Christian Kesten performs 'Toujours Je Suis Ici' at Ambika P3. Photograph: Simon Garry

The choice of venue was obvious. Where else to combine Martians and dystopian fembots, a 92-year-old Ethiopian nun, Egyptian electro-chaabi music, sound poetry and the UK premiere of an opera by Ezra Pound, to list only the mere-etching of the jubilar extravaganza of events that is **London contemporary music festival 2015**? No contest – at least until London's proposed £2.8m new concert hall, a report on which was published last week, has a rubble trench foundation to play around in. (More on that anon.)

Ambika P3 is a 14,000-sq-ft former concrete construction hall seven flights of stairs beneath the University of Westminster, and proved the ideal mixer. You have to work hard for your art down in this bunker. No good minding the hard benches or rigged-up, cold-war style spotlights glaring into your eyes from out of the subterranean gloom. In a quaintly old-fashioned way, P3 always feels like an authentic alternative event. Hosting its fourth sell-out festival in three years, LCMF celebrated the venue's raw potential with seven days of perhaps its wildest programming yet. I sampled from two, midweek. Niche, or a multitude of niches running amok, hardly begins to convey the range on offer.

Tuesday's event blasted ears and eyes with a screening of Ryan Trecartin's *Center Jerry*, made for the 2013 Venice Biennale, in which nightmarish mechanised creatures "act out their hyperactive, hyperreal lives within American sorority structures". At 53 minutes long, an edited version might have worked better, especially since you can watch it at home online with the volume down. But exposure is the thing, and we were exposed to this work of one of the most talked about young American video artists. The women behind me, or were they fembots themselves, were tutting with exasperation but to their credit sat it out.



Edgus from video and some 'surgically painted' bodies in 'Time With People' Photograph: Simon Garry

It certainly made you think, rather as having, say, a tree surgeon working outside your window makes you think

Tim Parkinson's *Time With People* (Opus 1, 2, 3 and 4), skillfully performed by Edgus Ensemble, explored what opera might be like if you removed music and orchestras. A man and a woman spoke unconnected monologues simultaneously while others clambered around on strategically placed heaps of rubbish – cardboard, plastic bottles, crumpled boxes. Installation artists such as Thomas Hirschhorn and Michael Landy are past masters at this kind of art of wreckage, but the added element here was amplified sound and thunderous drumming. It certainly made you think, rather as having, say, a tree surgeon working outside your window makes you think.

The UK premiere of Pound's *Le Testament de Villon* (1926) brought to mind Pound's own words "music begins to atrophy when it departs too far from the dance". Poetry made his reputation, and he was, too, a phenomenal dancer, but his music succumbs to the atrophy he sought to avoid. *Le Testament* is a chamber opera, for two voices and small ensemble, setting the 1461 text of the French poet Villon. Jean Cocteau, nearing an early run-through, apparently giggled all the time, finding anything relating to the middle ages or plainchant faintly ridiculous.

Decades on, we reverse such things, but one can understand Cocteau's reaction. Yet it was fascinating to hear this curiosity. Who else but LCMF would bring it back to life, with excellent performers (including singers Lore Lixenberg and Robert Giddon, and violinist Aisha Chibayeva) trampling out the same vintage refuse left over from the Parkinson piece.



Open access - Zunge Lösen Photograph: Simon Garry

The programme on Wednesday used Craig Raine's 1979 poem *A Martian Sends A Postcard Home*, a quiet roar against cliché, as a prompt. Andrew Hamilton's chamber work *For people who like art* (2009) exploded the tropes of minimalism, and Helmut Lachenmann's *Toccatina* (1986) turned the violin into a whiplashed percussion instrument. Christian Kesten and Serge Yvelin used the body as music machine in *Zunge Lösen*, Kesten's piece entirely for two tongues – not so much talking in tongues as not talking but wagging. Nothing is new. Sound poetry was invented by Hugo Ball and the dadaists almost exactly 100 years ago, in February 1916 in the Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich. It still strikes us as zany. Surfacing back into Baker Street after, I felt decidedly Martian. All humanity seemed to be enacting some sort of bizarre, non-narrative opera. The London contemporary music festival makes you hear the world differently, or perhaps as it really is.



Welcome to the Alien Sex Club

Art, Graphic Design

Posted by Eliza Williams · 16 July 2015 · 14:58 · Permalink · Comments (1)

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Artist John Walter creates exuberant, 'maximalist' art installations packed full of imagery, ideas and live performances, usually centred around a bar. His latest show, *Alien Sex Club*, which opens at Ambika P3 gallery in London next week, tackles a serious subject – HIV and sexual health testing – but with a smile.

Inspired by a mix of everything from gay sex clubs to cabaret theatre, *Qinxi* to HIV, *Alien Sex Club* is a large-scale art installation by Walter, which will be on show at Ambika P3 Gallery in July and August and later this year at the Homotopia Festival in Liverpool.



The Department of Ritual Objects installation by Walter, shown in Aberdeen in 2014

At the centre of the space is a 'cruise maze' – a structure common to sex clubs and gay saunas – which will lead viewers through the exhibition, where they can view paintings, sculptures and video artworks and also visit a bar and have their Tarot read. The idea for the installation was first inspired by Walter's excursions to gay clubs in London and the heightened performance of these experiences – "you go in, put all your clothes in a bag and pay £5 and you're just wearing your shoes and socks and you're walking around and then it's just a free-for-all," he says – and, in an arty echo of these clubs, there will be opportunities for visitors to take part in the work, or be a voyeur.

Fear not though, for while a strong element of performance is central to the work – Walter wants viewers to feel that they are entering a world, and be fully immersed into it – the intention is not to intimidate or make people uncomfortable. In fact, quite the opposite – Walter uses performance to be hospitable and spark conversations. The bartenders will act as semi-guides for the exhibition, for example, with visitors encouraged to hang out and chat. "If you say that there is a performance going on, people worry," says Walter. "Then when they get to it, they realise I'm not naked and there's not some awful body piercing thing going on, and that actually they're being offered a drink and a cake. Then they're enjoying themselves, which is when you've got them in the palm of your hand – that's when you can do the work."



Alien Sex Club Tarot Cards, 2015



Pug virus, 3D-printed sculpture, 2015



Pill Burden, 2014

The work, for Walter, is about the communication of his ideas, which include an exploration into our contemporary attitudes towards sexual health, specifically HIV, and also questions about the art world and its quirks and limitations. Walter has worked with Dr Alison Rodger, a lecturer at UCL London and a specialist in HIV, in his research for *Alien Sex Club*, and the exhibition will include free rapid HIV testing, hosted by the Tenence Higgins Trust. While there is a strong element of humour and cheekiness to much of Walter's work, the testing is presented seriously and with respect, and with it Walter sees the exhibition extending into political activism. "It felt right to do it here, because it's what the show is talking about and it seemed like we should talk about it upfront," he says.

Part of the point of including the testing is to normalise it. "It will be very different for different audiences," Walter explains. "For gay men in London it's a very normal thing, but maybe not to do it in that context. It's not something you can view other people doing, it's done privately and it's managed by THT. The purpose isn't to get somebody testing positive, the purpose is to normalise people to the idea of testing because that's the best way of reducing the spread of the virus. It has to be about going to the dentist, you just do it to check."

Alien Sex Club is at Ambika P3 Gallery in London from July 24–August 14, and Homotopia Festival in Liverpool from October 30–December 1. aliensexclub.com

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Volume 4
2015 – 17

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