

Gallery 2: Documents, Alternatives (#2)

January 18 – February 24 // Opening Night January 18, 6-8pm

PUBLIC PROGRAMS JAN / FEB AT VERGE ::

+ January 18, 5:30-6pm, curator introductions

+ January 18, opening night, live performance by Morrad + McArthur"

+ January 20, 1pm-3pm, Curator and artist talks for Documents, Alternatives #2

+ February 1, 5:30-7:30pm, live performances :: A Novel Script: Text as an Expanded Medium in Contemporary Practice

+ February 24, 1pm-3pm, Art crit and skype conversation

The documentation of ephemeral artwork, works made to be transient, changeable and un-fixed, is often problematic for the intent and premise of creation as it aligns itself with a particular moment, place and viewpoint in time. Lens-based methods are mostly relied upon to communicate actuality and happening and to fix the un-fixed memory of the artwork, and this is part of that problem. Effectively, this type of documentary device works in opposition to the concept of the artwork, cementing into a fragmentary history when all it wants is to be fleeting in its temporality. The lens-made recording tends to generalise vision and, by extension, it does not fully communicate the experience of 'being there' and present. Experience is difficult to replicate through a lens. This is problematic for artwork whose very premise is to be transient and time-based, and for which direct experience is a priority.

'Documents, Alternatives' is a collection of interlinked exhibitions that include time-based works reliant on performative process and created experience for understanding, which aim to resolve this issue by making the document and artwork reflexive. In doing this they acknowledge their need for change so to remain continuous and in process through staging a practical and thought provoking dialogue across venues. Positioned to operate at the intersection of artistic and academic domains, the project is as creatively stimulating and progressively invigorating as theoretically interrogatory and analytical. This is an experimental, discursive curatorial strategy whereby the document becomes a new artwork and the artwork becomes a new document to keep the ephemeral evolving and in transition. This is exhibition number 2 in the series.

To be true to the nature of ephemera, the discursive environment that is 'Documents Alternatives' is curated to map a staging that is in 'motion' and responsive to artistic meaning and intention. Here, the artworks learn from their prior incarnations, and respond to a re-grouping with the others in the collection of 'conversational' exhibitions, of which they are now becoming familiar, and their own concepts to be kept very much in the present. Moving beyond traditional unsympathetic means used as sole mode of translation, it offers a more effective way of communicating the artwork by keeping it current and active, and by denying its relegation to the historic past. To do this it positions the artwork as document and new work simultaneously thereby creating a generating loop of reflexive and developing activity. The exhibitions foreground fluidity and diversity of translation and includes

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multiple art voices and modes of output including video, light and holography, text, painting, print, web work, ethnographic environmental trace, jam making, and sound. Artists include: Tim Etchells, Andrew Pepper, Emma Cocker and Clare Thornton, Rochelle Haley, Kate Corder, Steve Dutton, Luce Choules, Morrad + McArthur, Brazier and Free, Andrew Bracey, Louise K. Wilson, and Angela Bartram.

Angela Bartram, 2017.

Artworks listed clockwise from left of entrance:

Luce Choules, Seam, 2015

Following an initial field visit, I returned to Green Cliff to make a performance survey of Bideford Black in situ. My survey focused on the mineral's attached and detached states – from embedded seam site to autonomous material – documenting its physical and ephemeral qualities. During the first rainy days of arriving, I observed the cliff painting itself with washes of deep dark black over grey. It was at that point I realised I was there to witness painting and drawing as a natural event – from then on, I would only be mining the mineral with concepts and cameras.

David Brazier & Kelda Free, Asylum Records, 2013

A residency at Fremantle Arts Centre in Western Australia sparked intensive research into its dark past as a 19th Century lunatic asylum. It's said to be the most haunted building in the Southern Hemisphere. We set about generating a new archive for the asylum. Research with the local library, museum, historians, a medium and paranormal investigators was presented to blackened symphonic metal band Advent Sorrow. Our collaboration spawned a dark ambient track featuring onsite recordings and *Like a Moth to the Flame*, a tale of loss and grief drawing inspiration from a historical account. *Asylum Records* pushes the past through an extreme form of mediation to alternative audiences, while challenging notions of who has the authority to create archives. The tracks feature on Advent Sorrow's tour playlist and are met with critical acclaim amongst black metal enthusiasts worldwide.

Andrew Bracey, ReconFigure Painting (Art Treasures of the World), 2017

Bracey primarily works on reproductions of oil paintings, each varying in style, period and type of figuration – that have been worked over with geometric/crystalline paintwork. 'ReconFigure Paintings' feature parasitic, painted additions to the 'host' humans that exist within historical figurative paintings. The triangle is used as the simplest shape that can create a complex structure. The eye alternates between his contemporary addition and the background of the original, something that is usually sidelined by the dominant figure. Despite a consistency of rules adopted when painting, each work takes on its own unique character and alter the viewers perception of the original source. For this new addition to the series, Bracey is slowly working his way through the book, *Art Treasures of the World*, the pages from the original document is kept on view, only altered by the replacement of figures with the painted marks.

Andrew Pepper, Three-Nine Flat, 2018

A variant of earlier installations of Three-Nine, this iteration compresses the configuration of three 35mm slide projections illuminating wall-based holograms to backlit slides of the three original projections. Accompanying this object is three photographic images of a lit hologram on a plinth and in situ. We continually make visual, spatial and critical assumptions about the objects and materials, which populate our surroundings – our documents, our documentation. Here, attempting to examine, through closer 'looking', the wall-based visual information dislocates from its presentation. The document becomes another type of document and work, the spatial made flat through varied photographic means and devices. A work that is reliant on its varied representational spatial histories.

Tim Etchells, Red Sky at Night, 2010

Red Sky at Night is an installation that changes through the course of its exhibition, through which sets of hand-made cardboard letters spelling the word 'hope' are hung with ribbon from brightly coloured helium balloons and installed against the gallery ceiling each day. The work activates the tension between the meaning of the text and its' shifting unstable physical manifestation; form and content held in a dynamic opposition that plays out repeatedly. Whilst Etchells' message of 'hope' is presented as 'damned either way' - trapped against the ceiling or else fallen to the ground - it is nonetheless always re-stated daily, re-placed and re-performed, as if one day the experiment of optimism might produce a different result.

Kate Corder, HOW and Jam Production, 2015

Before Heathrow Airport was opened (1946) the region was a place where market gardens, orchards and nutteries flourished. The cultivated land produced all kinds of fruit and vegetables to help feed London. HOW - Heathrow Orchard Walks (2014-16) is a series of walk events exploring contested land surrounding Heathrow Airport. Participants were invited to take part in walking the land, observing fruit blossom in spring and searching for fruit in the summer and autumn as part of the event. From the fruit foraging jam was produced. Some might call the jam a form of useful art, however I claim it is actually a form of happening sculpture. It can be eaten, but also sits in a gallery and acting as transmission and product of HOW, vital in its own agency and an alternative document of the event.

Rochelle Haley, Constructions of the Moving Body (after Trisha Brown' s Accumulation), 2015 and 2018

The drawings collectively titled *Constructions of the Moving Body*, are made after watching a recording of Trisha Brown' s performance of *Accumulations* 1971, and are suggestive of the possibility of movement. The objective of the drawings is to re-present the experience of watching the dance and evoke kinesthetic empathy through the drawn image. The multiple layers of the drawings do not diagram a sequence of movements linearly; the colours and shapes sometimes overlap suggesting a temporal order while not clearly arranging the steps like dance notation might.

Louise K Wilson, Parabola, 2017

A single channel video that explores experiences of weightlessness.

In the climbing phase, gravity changes from 1 G to 2 G for 20 seconds before achieving the weightless phase at the top of the curve for approximately 25 seconds. During the descent phase of the flight, the plane returns to the 2G

for roughly 20 seconds and the cycle is repeated. The experience of weightlessness, in other words, is framed by moments of double gravity. There are no windows in the plane's hold so there is no sense of where you are in (air)space. The sheer brute force quality of zero gravity surprises, you are not floating but falling upwards.

Emma Cocker & Clare Thornton, *The Italic I*, 2016

The Italic I is a collaborative enquiry for exploring the different states of potential made possible through purposefully surrendering to the event of a repeated fall. Parallel to performance and its visual documents, *The Italic I* has involved the production of a textual lexicon for reflecting on the different episodes within falling, generated through the 'free-fall' of conversational exchange. An attempt is made to slow and extend the duration of falling in order to elaborate upon its various phases or 'scenes'. For *Documents, Alternatives*, Cocker and Thornton present a slowly looping video and text-work developed in dialogue with creative technologist Dane Watkins.

Morrad+McArthur, *A Lack of Chairs*, 2017 (sound work)

This is a chance encounter of three sonic assemblages; each of these entities seeks continuity but originates from a disparate place. They link themselves together through time, meeting each other through random actions, some of which will only occur once. These entities have been sourced and gathered from various situations located from London to Sydney, only meeting together at this middle ground in this situated context. The sound and its affect is always differing throughout the event; the artists see the work as three creatures interacting in random acts forming 'instants' that merge to become one act of sound; the listener is the only document of this encounter at these moments in time, in this space.

Angela Bartram, *366:366 (eventually animated)*, 2018

For the leap year of 2016 I exhaled on an etching plate every day. 366 breaths layered on the same surface, in the same place, and at roughly the same time. The accumulative breaths charted the process of isolating and capturing those layered singular exhalations, and now the act is being reversed through repetitive laborious methods. '366:366 (eventually animated)' is a work in process, a series of prints made from the etched plate to match the number of breaths which scored it's image. These prints become the animation, itself in a state of being unfinished and incomplete in tandem with the etching process on which it relies.

Steve Dutton *Some Mountain Noise*, 2017

A set of drawings that respond to some mountains in Mallorca, made whilst thinking around ideas concerning deep time. This work, as with all my artistic investigations, forms part of an ongoing exploration into mutability of images, texts, signs and times.

Documents, Alternatives #1 was at Airspace, Stoke on Trent (UK), November – December 2017.

Documents, Alternatives #3 to be at BSAD, Bath (UK), April- May 2018.

Documents, Alternatives #4 to be at ONCA, Brighton (UK) as part of Brighton Digital Festival, September – October 2018.

Thank you to University of Derby (UK) for supporting this exhibition.

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