

TRANSMISSION 2015



AN UNSENTIMENTAL EDUCATION. ON BECOMING AN ARTIST

Fine Art Lecture Series, in collaboration with Site Gallery
Sheffield Hallam University
PENNINE LECTURE THEATRE
HOWARD BUILDING, CITY CAMPUS
Sheffield S1 1WB

Tuesdays from 4.30 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT ON 14 APRIL THE LECTURE WILL BEGIN
AT 4 O'CLOCK PROMPT**

There is no lecture on Tuesday 24 February

THE LECTURE SERIES IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Transmission is convened by Michelle Atherton, Sharon Kivland, TC McCormack, Hester Reeve,
and Julie Westerman, in collaboration with Site Gallery, Sheffield

www.transmission.uk.com

www.sitegallery.org

AN UNSENTIMENTAL EDUCATION: ON BECOMING AN ARTIST

At the end of Gustave Flaubert's great novel about love and history, *A Sentimental Education*, from which we shamelessly steal part of our title, the protagonist Frédéric Moreau and his oldest school friend Deslauriers reminisce about their adolescence. They remember going to a brothel together, the anticipation and excitement. Once there, thinking that the laughing prostitutes were making fun of him, Frédéric bolted from the place. But in the unconsummated experience, there lies the possibility of fantasy and happiness:

‘That was the best we ever got!’ said Frédéric.

‘Yes, perhaps so, indeed! It was the best time we ever had,’ said Deslauriers.

Could this be the model for learning how one becomes an artist: A lack of satisfaction that provides a drive? An expectation of knowledge that is never fully imparted? The imaginative reconstruction of the past?

We ask how artists become and why, how this is learnt (and unlearnt), how it is imagined and exemplified. In an era where the ‘artist as personality’ may no longer be thought to be of interest or instruction to understanding art, we look at the external forces and inner structures that produce artist-figures and artistic capacity. What type of fantasy is at work here and how much does the decision to become an artist count in becoming one? Though our students may grumble now at certain of the things we expect them to do, they will soon go on to say (joining every other former art school graduate): ‘Oh, how I miss art school, how I miss the crits – it was truly the best time of my life!’

27 JANUARY

GRAHAM DOLPHIN

Chair: Chloë Brown

Graham Dolphin works across a wide range of media: film, sound, drawing, and objects. The intensity of technical attention in his work is analogous to the intensity of fans' attachments to celebrities on which his work hinges. The emotional charge of these one-sided, fan-celebrity relationships remains intact despite Dolphin's detached, obsessive approach to art-making. His process-driven works are reflections of how we engage with contemporary culture. Dolphin has had solo presentations of his work at **BALTIC** Centre for Contemporary Art, Växjö Konsthall, Sweden, and Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (mima). Group shows at institutions include Kiasma, Finland, Turner Contemporary, Dublin National Gallery, and Oslo National Gallery. His work is included in the collections of mima, Museum Wiesbaden, Zabłudowice Collection, and David Roberts Art Foundation. He is represented by SEVENTEEN, London, and David Risley Gallery, Copenhagen.



3 FEBRUARY

RICHARD LAYZELL

Chair: TC McCormack

Richard Layzell's extended residency in industry as a 'visionaire' led to the invention and profiling of *Olaf Gunderssen* and ultimately the *Gunderssen Building*, alongside several other interventions into corporate culture. His subsequent collaboration with the equally fictional Tania Koswycz developed, through her early appearances in Colchester and Wagga Wagga, into the *Talking to Tania* dialogues. Their work took physical form as *The Manifestation*, a dialogic installation, which toured the UK in 2008-9. His *Square Mile* residency in Shanghai, hosted by the elusive Shanghai E Arts, spawned a series of interventions and a performance /lecture *The River Flows*, shown in Glasgow, London, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Shanghai. Recent work includes *Dataography* at the Knowle West Media Centre in Bristol, the promotion and profiling of *Pivotal Dave* for *Key Notes*, and a major installation for the Commonwealth Games, Tramway, Glasgow, 2014. He is the author of *Cream Pages* and *Enhanced Performance*, an honorary associate of the NRLA, a ResGen associate artist, and Pathway Leader for Print and Time-based Media at Wimbledon College of Arts.



10 FEBRUARY

GRACE SCHWINDT

Chair: Sara Cluggish

Grace Schwindt works with film, live performance, and sculpture. An MA graduate from the Slade School of Fine Art, 2008, her projects have included: participation in the Associate Artist Programme at LUX Artists Moving Images, 2009; a solo exhibition at White Columns Gallery, New York, 2010; a performance at *The Signal*, South London Gallery, 2011; a feature-length film *Tenant*, Collective Gallery, Edinburgh; and works at Wiels, Brussels, Whitechapel Gallery, London, and Void, Derry.



Drinks at Site Gallery, 6.15 - 7.30 p.m.

Following Grace Schwindt's lecture you are invited to Site Gallery for post-lecture drinks and a chance to see her new installation *Only a Free Individual Can Create a Free Society*. Grace Schwindt examines the radical left-wing politics of Germany in the 1960 and 70s, addressing the idea of freedom: how it was, how it is understood, and who, if anyone, can really access it.

Places are limited so booking is advised: <http://graceschwindtdrinks.eventbrite.co.uk>

Grace Schwindt's exhibition at Site Gallery runs from 10 January to 28 February 2015, free entry.

17 FEBRUARY

ANDREW CONIO

Chair: Michelle Atherton

Andrew Conio is a writer, artist, and scriptwriter. He has published on a range of subjects including philosophy, architecture, language, artist's film, institutional critique, creativity and painting and is currently editing the volume, *Occupy a People Yet to Come* for the Open Humanities Press, and writing a monograph entitled *Savage Money*. He has taught in arts schools for twenty years, including Wolverhampton, Rhamallah, Bergen, Brighton, Chelsea and is currently Director of Studies for Fine Art at Kent University. Witnessing the transformation of the Art School has led Andrew Conio to critique the epistemological and ontological tensions between the 'provable' and 'demonstrable' predicates that shore up the orthodoxies of *Teaching and Learning* and the artist's demands for the contingent and the open.



3 MARCH

SAM CURTIS

Chair: Julie Westerman

Sam Curtis is a London-based artist, curator, and fishmonger. His projects and works evolve from the lived experience of social and economic dilemmas. His practice investigates how we situate ourselves within life's systems and structures. Recent work has revolved around the questions: What does creative work look like? And how do we maintain and negotiate our place in wider systems of control while cultivating creativity and retaining a sense of autonomy? Sam Curtis runs the Centre for Innovative and Radical Fishmongery. He is a founder and member of Seymour Art Collective, a group of artists who are or have been homeless. He is a curator at the Bethlem Gallery, situated in the Bethlem Royal Hospital, London.

There will be an extra seminar discussion following this, starting at 6 o'clock.



10 MARCH

RORY PILGRIM

Chair: Sara Cluggish

Rory Pilgrim's work explores questions of time and connections between activism, spirituality, music and performance. Rory Pilgrim graduated from Chelsea College of Art in 2008. From 2008 to 2010 he was a participant of the De Ateliers residency programme Amsterdam. Recent solo exhibitions include *sic!* Raum für Kunst, Luzern, 2014, *Rongwrong*, Amsterdam, 2014, and performances in Kunst Werk, Berlin, 2013, Rowing Project, London, 2013, Fare, Milan 2012, and Arco, Madrid, 2012. In 2012, Pilgrim was commissioned to produce a large-scale performance to commemorate the reopening of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.



Drinks at Site Gallery, 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Following Rory Pilgrim's lecture, you are invited for drinks at Site Gallery in his Platform residency space. For his four-week residency, *Words are not signs, they are years*, Pilgrim will gather an assembly of local elders to discuss progress as tied to generation and the wisdom of age as a radical proposition. Their conversation will be captured and shared in the form of hand-written signage designed by Pilgrim and Andrews, and a musical performance.

Places are limited so booking is advised: <http://rorypilgrimdrinks.eventbrite.co.uk>

Rory Pilgrim's residency is open to the public from 3 to 28 March 2015, free entry

17 MARCH

CLUNIE REID

Chair: Michelle Atherton

Clunie Reid works in digital imagery, mixed-media, and video. Solo exhibitions of her works include *Out There, Not Us*, Focal Point Gallery, Southend, 2009, *Peek A De Boom*, Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart, 2009, *Dumb Down, Get Dressed, Move Out*, Studio Voltaire, London, 2010, *In Pursuit of the Liquid*, MOTinternational, London, 2013, and *Project 8* at the Contemporary Art Society. She has also taken part in *Nought to Sixty*, ICA, London, 2008, *Karaoke* Fotomuseum, Winterthur, 2009, *In The Event Of Suspicion* Bielefeld Kunstverein, 2010, *Free*, New Museum, New York, 2010, *Art Now* at Tate Britain (with James Richards), 2010, and *The Dark Cube* Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2012). Recent screenings include *Les Fleurs du Mal* BWA Wroclaw, 2012, *Alma Mater* (Lux touring programme of new British Video art), 2012, *Stupidious*, SLG, 2014. and Film: Art Basel Miami Beach, 2014. She is guest editor for Bookworks for their series *GSOH: The Rest is Dark*. She is a Senior Lecturer at Central Saint Martins, and is represented by MOTinternational.



24 MARCH

72–82 A film by William Raban

Introduced by the producer of the film, Jonathan Harvey, and followed by a discussion

Chair: Sharon Kivland

72–82 is a one-hour film by William Raban commissioned by Acme Studios as part of its fortieth anniversary celebrations, following the archive exhibition at Whitechapel Gallery, *Supporting Artists: Acme's First Decade 1972–1982*, September 2013 to February 2014. The film includes footage of performances and installations at the Acme Gallery documented by Raban, as well as extracts from his own films made at the time in East London. David Cunningham, who has created the sound for the film, was also part of this history. He was based at Acme's Acre Lane studios, Brixton, home to experimental rock bands *This Heat* and Cunningham's *The Flying Lizards*, and where a disused cold store was converted into a recording studio, 'Cold Storage'. Through the layering of this archive material 72–82 powerfully communicates this history and the spirit of that time, animated by the voices of artists and others who were part of the story, and whom Raban interviewed for the film: Kevin Atherton, Bobby Baker, Anne Bean, Stuart Brisley, Richard Cork, David Critchley, Richard Deacon, Fergus Early, Ron Haselden, Charles Hayward, Jacky Lansley, Jock McFadyen, Ken McMullen, Sandy Nairne, Simon Read, Claire Smith, Cosey Fanni Tutti, Anthony Whishaw, Alison Wilding, Richard Wilson, and Bill Woodrow.



14 APRIL N.B. 4 o'clock start

SIMONE AABERG KAERN

SCREENING OF *SISTERS IN THE SKY*

Chair: Lise Autogena

In the early 1990s Simone Aaberg Kærn began working with projects relating to surveillance and control. This, however, soon turned into a fascination for the unreachable and impossible task of floating: flying in the space. Through animated flying videos, such as *Air*, 1994, *wanna fly*, 1995, and *Royal Greenland*, 1996, Simone Aaberg Kærn found a symbolic free space in the air. At first, it was animated spaces, in which she flew across the skies of Copenhagen, New York, and Greenland seeking the limits of gravity and individual unassisted human flight. Soon after Simone Aaberg Kærn achieved her own flight certificate in order to produce the work, *Sisters in the Sky*.



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BOOKS:

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- Fisher, Elizabeth, & Rebecca Fortnum (eds), *On Not Knowing: How Artists Think*, London: Black Dog Publishing, 2013
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- Tom Hardy (ed.), *Art Education in a Postmodern World*, Bristol: Intellect, 2006
- Hustvedt, Siri, *What I Loved*, London: Sceptre, 2003
- Illich, Ivan, *Deschooling Society*, London: Marion Boyars, 1995 [1968]
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- Maude-Roxby, Alice, *Anti-Academy*, Southampton: John Hansard Gallery, 2014
- Neidich, Warren (ed.), *The Noologist Handbook and Other Art Experiments*, Paris: Paraguay Press, 2013
- Place, Vanessa, & Robert Fitterman, *Notes on Conceptualism*, New York: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2009
- Rancière, Jacques, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, trans. by Kristin Ross, Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991
- Szczelkun, Stefan, *AGIT DISCO*, London: Mute Books, 2011
- Tickner, Lisa, *Hornsey 1968: The Art School Revolution*, London: Francis Lincoln, 2008

FILMS:

- A Man Escaped*, dir. Robert Bresson, 1956
- The White Ribbon*, dir. Michael Haneke, 2009
- Céline and Julie Go Boating*, dir. Jacques Rivette, 1974

WEB LINKS:

- http://www.deutscher-pavillon.org/2009/pdf_gillick/School.pdf
- http://www.variant.org.uk/39_40texts/comp39_40.html
- <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/year-locked-room>
- <https://www.ica.org.uk/whats-on/just-what-it-makes-todays-art-schools-so-different-so-appealing>

AN UNSENTIMENTAL EDUCATION

NOTES ON BECOMING AN ARTIST



MICHELLE ATHERTON

Frieze Issue 164 June August 2014. *What's hot what's not*

HOT

Despair/ politics (sort of) /appropriating queer imagery / complicated back-stories to arrangements of seemingly unrelated objects / being a really young artist / being a really old artist / being a dead artist / penises / good ceramics / bad ceramics / old ceramics / new ceramics / paintings with stuff on them / Madame Récamier / re-creating canonical paintings with the figures removed / selling art to rappers / rappers / 1980s Scottish painting / boycotts / blank verse / Feminist Cyborg theory / fridges / getting married / poodles /

HOLDING STEADY

A vague sense of ennui / solipsism / Chris Marker or Siri-type voice-overs / allusions to object-orientated ontology while signaling skepticism / mis-use of the word 'performative' / breasts / galleries showing mainly male artists / lovely vitrines full of abject objects / unrealized films / impenetrable press releases / divorce / Jean Cocteau / vitrines full of invitations to performances in Ghent in 1964 or the East Village in 1972 or artists run- spaces in Hoxton in 1993 / no-one having a clue what "post-internet art" means / vague ethnography / vases / iambic pentameter / cupboards / dressage / fabric / spiritualism / cats /

NOT

Earnestness / authenticity / being controversial / soft electronic 'ping' sounds in videos / beauty (the old fashion kind) / ignoring the politics of the country you've been invited to show in / bottoms / boastfulness / quoting Rosalind Krauss in your press release / Shia LaBeouf / turntables / hard-edge abstraction / James Franco / Ryanair / eggs / elbows / Charles Bukowski / describing what you do in your studio a 'praxis' / poles leaning against walls for no good reason / hegemony / taxidermy / rhyming couplets / relational aesthetics / banging on / poor punctuation / bad manners / religion / rodents

SHARON KIVLAND

Let me state my political affiliations.

I am a Jacobin, radical and open-hearted, believing in education (until my language was silenced). No, I am a Montagnard, an uncompromising woman of action. Then I am a *Communarde*, betrayed on the last barricade by all those herring voucher distributors who failed to give us a plan; I stood shoulder to shoulder with my comrades in the cemetery of Montmartre (I shall never cease to cry for vengeance). I am an anarchist, preaching revolution, making inflammatory speeches and burning bakers' shops. No, more properly, I am a Bolshevik, militant and class-conscious. As a *soixante-huitarde*, I am utopian, *jouissante*, shouting 'teachers, not police', building barricades once again. I retreat, reforming my position under the banner of feminism. A *banlieusarde*, I overturn cars and set fire to them. In the Malian clubs of Barbès, I dance the *Guantánamo* with others (we hold our hands above our heads, clasped at the wrists, as though manacled). With the *NPA*, I march in the streets, against the deportation of those without papers, against racism, against the pension reforms, against education cuts, against tuition fees. OCCUPY means something to me, a moment to live and think, where freedom is constructed in community, in common space, and it is associative, performative, and public. I am a keeper of history.

I remember that Hannah Arendt said of herself: 'I don't fit'. I remember her idea of '*l'oeuvre*', the work, the work of art opposed to labour.

TC McCORMACK

My guidelines are: acting in headlessness; 'Energy = Yes! Quality = No!'; being weak but wanting to make a strong work; not economizing oneself; self-expenditure; 'Panic is the solution!'; being both precise and exaggerating; undermining oneself; being cruel vis-à-vis one's own work, being tenacious, 'Less is less! More is more!'; 'Never won, but never completely lost!'; having the ambition to coin a new concept with my work; assuming responsibility for everything concerning my work; accepting to look dumb in front of my own work; 'Better is always less good!'; refusing all hierarchies; believing in the friendship between Art and Philosophy; being ready because the first to pay the price for one's work.

'Doing Art Politically' Thomas Hirschhorn

When does this moment occur, when many artists accept the title of *artist*, what triggers an individual to claim this label for themselves? Is it when they need to fill in a form that requires them to identify their occupation, or on renewing their passport, or maybe it's when an innocent question put to them in some social setting. What is their answer, many can't quite claim the pure unadulterated label 'Artist', many of them prefer to prefix it with some qualifier such as; *emerging, part time, misunderstood, lapsed*, or just mumble a incoherent sentence containing a term like; *multidisciplinary* or *community based*...

Hirschhorn's text is not only refreshing for the simple confidence to accept the label of Artist, but to proclaim the terrain that defines his practice. Becoming an artist is a process of identifying the shape of our practice, it permeates everything we do and how we do it; from understanding our processes of thinking and making to how we interact with the world. This *process of becoming* asks us to get better at owning the confidence to claim such a rarified space, an often misunderstood and even distrusted space.

Do we ever really make this claim, stand up to proclaim and identify ourselves as artists, I suspect it's more likely that it creeps up on us, after a period of time and having produced a 'body of work', do we own up...in a moment of weakness or resignation, a retrospective reality hits us and we step out of the diffuse soup we have been swimming in. This 'stepping out' moment needs more recognition, for it's only at this point (and beyond) that we can proclaim guidelines akin to Hirschhorn's. We have understood how to freely navigate towards unknowable outcomes and how failing better is the best means to get there.

HESTER REEVE

I always felt I was, but only when I became one, was I one, an artist. And at the very point when I firmly starred in my own novel as a practiced, qualified, travelled, eulogised, and most artistic of artists did I realise that, indeed, I needed to no longer say the word 'artist' in conjunction with myself. Because as I became, the molecular structure of my world changed itself so that the very becomingness of me became blown up as a large question which still sits on a chair in the corner of my bedroom. It waits for me to come home from the Academy each evening (and then eyes me up hungrily as I sleep). And when we read together my heart beats fast and when I go into the studio we intermingle as a secret pocket of amorous matter. Growing in this pocket is also the memory of seeing Salvador Dali's *Enigma of William Tell*, when still a very young child, because part of my living being is still stuck to the ground in front of that image, certain of my organs are as much composed of well-used paint brushes as they are of flesh. And so, you see, it is pointless to chase after me for words of wisdom; I am lost to you forever in my longing to become the apple of the Art Question's eye.

JULIE WESTERMAN

I feel that I am always in the state of becoming an artist and having been in that state for so long that perhaps I am now in a state of becoming a better artist. This may be followed by a period of becoming a mature artist, reinventing myself as an artist, or establishing myself as a different type of artist. Perhaps I will take some time off from being an artist so that I can get on with making some work

Transmission is the passing of information *via* a channel, and this is the intention of the **Transmission** project. We enquire about the aesthetic and discursive forms required by practices in the field of contemporary art and theory that address sociality and subjectivity. It has encompassed a lecture programme, seminar discussions, an annual symposium, a print portfolio, four series of books: *Transmission Annual*, *The Rules of Engagement*, *Transmission* chapbooks, and five volumes of discussions/interviews, entitled *Transmission: Speaking and Listening*. The lecture series, which began in 2001, in collaboration with Site Gallery and Showroom Cinema, changed its format in October 2007, emphasising its integration into both pedagogy and practice/research. In 2013 **Transmission** was part of **Art Sheffield**. The lectures series has a annual theme, and involves students from all parts of Fine Art. It is co-convened with Site Gallery, and this year includes several workshops and gallery visits with exhibiting artists.

Site Gallery is Sheffield's leading international contemporary art space, supporting artists specialising in moving image, new media and performance. Pioneering emerging art practices and ideas, **Site** works in partnership with local, regional and international collaborators to nurture artistic talent and support the development of contemporary art. At the heart of what Site does, is the connecting of people to artists and to art, inspiring new thinking and debate through their public programmes and participatory activity.

