

Exhibition Information

DUNCAN MARQUISS

copying errors

Sat 14 May - Sun 3 July 2016

DCA
Dundee Contemporary Arts

152 Nethergate
Dundee DD1 4DY
01382 909900
Scottish Charity No. SC026631

Open daily 11:00-18:00
Open late Thu 20:00
Admission free
www.dca.org.uk

INTRODUCTION

Copying Errors is the largest exhibition to date by Scottish artist Duncan Marquiss. In his video works, drawings and prints, Marquiss, who won the prestigious Margaret Tait Award in 2015, often draws links between a range of cultural reference points, bringing them together in new and unexpected ways. The title of the exhibition refers to biological variations caused by genetic errors, yet it is also a reference to Marquiss' preoccupation with the idiosyncrasies that occur within the materials he uses. *Copying Errors* includes the first gallery presentation of his film *Evolutionary Jerks & Gradualist Creeps*, which received its world premiere at Glasgow Film Festival earlier this year.

The exhibition covers several years of Marquiss' practice, revealing shifts in style and execution. His experimental instinct allows him to switch freely from the documentary format of *Evolutionary Jerks & Gradualist Creeps* to works that contain references to avant garde arts practices, including frottage drawings of seemingly incidental details from the studio and flicker films that play with visual perception.

Marquiss graduated in 2001 in Fine Art Printmaking at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, Dundee and subsequently from the MFA at Glasgow School of Art in 2005. He undertook the LUX Associate Artist Programme, London in 2009. Recent exhibitions and screenings include *Renderuin*, Glasgow International Festival 2016; *Experimenta*, BFI London Film Festival; *International Motley - Honest Signals*, Glasgow Project Room; *Index, Flatness.eu* screening at Microscope Gallery, New York; *Foraging Economics*, essay for The Happy Hypocrite, 2014; and an artist curated programme, *Information Foraging*, for the Artist Moving Image Festival Tramway, Glasgow 2013. Marquiss is based in Glasgow.

Marquiss has been working with DCA Print Studio to produce new work for the exhibition and a new edition. The edition and a catalogue featuring texts by John Douglas Millar and Marquiss will be launched at DCA on Thu 16 June (please see page 6 for further information).

Copying Errors is part of Ignite, Dundee's Festival of Creativity.



Duncan Marquiss, *Distressed Inventory*, charcoal and pencil on paper, 2011

GALLERY ONE

Marquiss' Margaret Tait commission, *Evolutionary Jerks & Gradualist Creeps*, features interviews with evolutionary biologists Niles Eldredge and Armand Marie Leroi. They discuss Eldredge's revolutionary theory of Punctuated Equilibria: a picture of the history of life characterised by rapid changes followed by long periods of stasis. This dialogue is interwoven with footage shot by Marquiss, who takes the themes of the conversation as a cue for his image-making processes and editing structures.

"Evolutionary Jerks and Gradualist Creeps is a characteristically generous, complex and nuanced treatment of questions pertaining to the potential and limits of scientific methodology for the analysis of material culture. Elegantly assembled from interviews conducted with two leading evolutionary scientists - Niles Eldredge and Armand Marie Leroy - along with carefully shot ambient footage, the film performs the stakes involved in the transposition of one language or mode of knowledge production into the context of another. In doing so the work raises a series of significant questions: what is culture as an object and what is the object of culture? To what extent can the contours and dynamics of cultural production be read through the prism of scientific enquiry? Can social theory provide a critique of scientific method? What is the relationship between theory and practice in both evolutionary and political science? Can cultural production be understood systematically? What is the value of a misreading? And, ultimately, what is the truth content of art? The film cannily withdraws from providing any concrete answers to these questions, instead it nuances and mediates the discursive field in order to produce an object, or, perhaps better, a glyph under which they might be considered."

John Douglas Millar, *Duncan Marquiss' Evolutionary Jerks and Gradualist Creeps*, 2016

GALLERY TWO

Copying Errors builds upon two recent exhibitions made by the artist in Glasgow. Drawings from these shows are installed alongside earlier examples to present a survey of his work from the last decade. Some drawings are informed by analogies between social signs inherent in clothing, and the signals birds send to each other with their plumage. This theme is continued in the new screenprints Marquiss has developed in DCA Print Studio, which feature macro photographs of the patterning of jay feathers.

"The blue iridescence of some birds' feathers are not caused by pigmentation but are created by a process of interference – the faceted structure of the feather surface reflects light in multiple directions, producing the shimmering colours

optically, within the eye of the beholder. Interference patterns, or moirés, result from the overlaying of two similar signals, which when knocked slightly out of sync create a third signal or pattern.”

Duncan Marquiss, *International Motley - Honest Signals*, 2015

Some earlier drawings are taken from an exhibition entitled *Distressed Inventory*, an economics term for stock that has lost its market value, such as last season’s fashions or outdated media formats. These drawings were made using studio detritus and by-product materials, the distressed inventory of Marquiss’ own studio, and consider the relative nature of their own market value.

“I recently made a series of artworks using frottage – a technique frequently used by the Surrealist Max Ernst, to produce rubbings of textured surfaces. I used clothes as a rubbing surface. The resulting works have an uncanny photographic quality, appearing as flattened-out ghosts of the garments used to imprint the image. These inverted monochrome replicas reminded me of pre-distressed clothing - copies or impostors, of sorts, produced with friction.”

Duncan Marquiss, *Pre-distressed*, 2011

The print collage work *Invisible Everywhere* is another example of Marquiss’ habit of layering and overlapping cultural references and imagery. The artist often brings together subject matter and materials from disparate sources to produce hybrid perspectives.

At the centre of the gallery Marquiss has produced an ephemeral, floor-based drawing entitled *Workers*, which features a system of self-generating patterns. The drawing uses a simple set of rules to determine which cells are turned on or off depending on the state of the neighboring squares. This algorithm is borrowed from a cellular automata code (CA). CAs are a simple system developed by John Von Neumann (1903 – 1957) for modelling self-replicating artificial life-forms. CAs can create ordered patterns out of a random starting state and often produce patterns found in nature, such as the arrays of pigmentation on the shells of some sea snails. The title of the work nods to the group behaviour of insect colonies that operate without a central architect, and the division of labour involved in the production of the work itself.

Presented in antechambers, *Midday* and *Midgie Noise* are short video works, capturing the artist’s hand and patterns of sunlight at noon through a wooden blind and a swarm of midgies in a field at night respectively. These patterns echo those found in Marquiss’ drawings and prints in the main gallery.

TALKS AND EVENTS

Book your place on 01382 909 900.
For more information visit
www.dca.org.uk

Meet the Artist

Fri 13 May, 18:30
Galleries. Free, but please book in advance.

Join Duncan Marquiss and Graham Domke, Exhibitions Curator at DCA, for an introduction to and discussion of *Copying Errors* ahead of its official opening.

After Party

Fri 13 May, 21:00 - late
Redd Function Suite, 3 Session Street
Free, drop in.

Join us after the exhibition opening for a guest DJ set from Andy Wake (Hot Club), a contemporary and collaborator of Marquiss' since art school in Dundee, and colleague in The Phantom Band and Omnivore Demon.

Senior Citizen Kane Tour and Workshop

Tue 14 June, 10:30
Galleries. Free, but please book in advance.

This event is designed for our visitors aged 60 and over. Explore the exhibition with one of our friendly Gallery Assistants, share your thoughts, chat over a cup of tea and try out a creative activity.

Publication launch

Thu 16 June, 18:30 - 21:00
Galleries. Free, but please book in advance.

Duncan Marquiss has programmed an evening of improvised music and performance to launch the first publication on his work, which documents his exhibition at DCA and contains a commissioned essay by John Douglas Millar and texts by Marquiss himself. A new edition produced in DCA Print Studio will also be launched.

(((echo)))

Thu 23 June, 19:00
Galleries. Free, drop in.

Come along and contribute to this popular event designed to provoke discussions about the current exhibition through a series of presentations by local artists. Please email exhibitions@dca.org.uk by Mon 13 June if you are interested in proposing a response to Marquiss' exhibition.

ARTIST'S CHOICE SCREENING

The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner & How Much Wood Would a Wood Chuck Chuck

Cinema. Sun 26 June, 15:00

If ever there was a filmmaker who understood that reality was stranger than fiction it is surely Werner Herzog; and this may explain why so many of his best films are documentaries. DCA is therefore proud to present a double-bill of his finest non-fiction films, both made during the director's heyday in the mid-1970s. *How Much*

Wood Would a Woodchuck Chuck sees Herzog in his ethnographic mode, exploring his fascination with isolated communities and their strange rituals and forms of communication. The film, which documents the American cattle auctioning championship, is eccentric even by Herzog's peerless standards, but for the German filmmaker the motor-mouthed delivery of these auctioneers is nothing less than the "poetry of capitalism". In the end it is impossible not to share Herzog's fascination with this seemingly alien world. *The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner* is a profile of Walter Steiner, a German sculptor who is also an Olympic ski-jumper. Do not, however, expect something akin to *Eddie the Eagle*. Rather, this is quintessential Herzog and the director equates the sport with man's desire to defy gravity and conquer his fears, particularly that of death. Despite its short run-time, it's a major addition to the Herzog canon.

Dir: Werner Herzog / 1976 & 1974 / Germany / 1h30m / Recommended 15
German with English subtitles

FOR YOUNGER VISITORS AND FAMILIES

Family Art Lab

Sat 18 June, 13:00 - 15:00

Activity Room. Free, but please book in advance. Suitable from ages 5+. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Join our artists for some fun and take some time to explore Duncan Marquiss' exhibition. Talk about what you see, make creative responses

and try out new techniques. Make the most of our space to create mess and experiment. This session lasts two hours but you don't have to stay for the whole time.

Art Cart

Sat 14 May, Sat 11 June & Sat 25 June, 13:00 – 15:00
Level 4. Free, drop in.

Fun for all ages, Art Cart offers active ways to connect with each exhibition. For this show you can have fun exploring maths, music and pattern.

Activity Room

Open daily unless being used for a workshop. Free, drop in.

DCA Activity Room is a comfy, imaginative space for younger visitors and families inspired by the work of Bruno Munari. Try out one of our DIY activities, browse our children's art library and make connections with the exhibition.

JUST ASK

Our friendly Gallery Assistants are always happy to help with your questions.

Keep up to date with the very latest from DCA by visiting www.dca.org.uk or by following us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Tweet us your thoughts on the exhibition using **#helloDCA**.

NEXT EXHIBITION

Theresa Duncan | Eddo Stern

Sat 16 July - Sun 4 September 2016

THE ARTIST WOULD LIKE TO THANK:

Isla Leaver Yap
Luke Collins
LUX Scotland
Sean Greenhorn
Glasgow Film Festival
Niles Eldredge
Armand Marie Leroi
Hannah Conroy
Nadia Senft
John-Paul Somerville
Artist Pension Trust
Annis Fitzhugh
Clare McVinnie
Malcolm Thomson
DCA Print Studio
Anton Beaver
Holly Keasey
John Louden
Jonny Lyons
Adrian Murray
Alison Scott
Jason Shearer
Jessie Giovane Staniland
DCA Install team
Kimberley O'Neil
Eilidh McNair
Neil McGuire
Andy Wake
Gregor Marks