

Thomson & Craighead Maps DNA and Spam

Sat 18 January - Sun 16 March 2014

Dundee Contemporary Arts

DCA

Dundee Contemporary Arts

152 Nethergate
Dundee DD1 4DY
01382 909900

www.dca.org.uk

Open daily 11:00 - 18:00
Open late Thu until 20:00
Admission free

Reg Charity No. SC026631

INTRODUCTION

We are delighted to welcome back artists Thomson & Craighead to DCA for our first exhibition of 2014. *Maps DNA and Spam* features new works (*Dundee Wall*, *Corruption* and *The First Person*) alongside a selection of important older pieces including *The Time Machine in Alphabetical Order*, *Belief* and *A Short Film About War*.

Much of Thomson & Craighead's work looks at how communication networks such as the world wide web are changing the way we relate to the world around us - highlighting the conflict between our private and public identities, and how the tension between the global and the local inform our sense of place and self in the world.

Jon Thomson, born 1969, and Alison Craighead, born 1971, studied at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art in Dundee and now live and work in London and Kingussie. Thomson is Reader in Fine Art at The Slade School of Fine Art, University College London, while Craighead is Reader in Visual Culture and Contemporary Art at University of Westminster and lectures in Fine Art at Goldsmiths University London. Thomson & Craighead have been working together since 1993. Recent exhibitions include MEWO Kunsthalle, Memmingen and Carroll / Fletcher, London. They exhibited at DCA in 2009 in the group exhibition *Timecode*.

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

FOYER

Dundee Wall, 2014

Paper, paste

Dundee Wall is a physical manifestation of the invisible city all around us formed from a selection of the social networking traffic within a 20 mile radius of the city. Realised from the beginning of 2014, publicly available status updates were selected then published as a vast array of typeset posters, revealing the idle musings of ourselves to ourselves as a form of concrete poetry. The pasted up *Dundee Wall* resembles a newspaper in the age of the internet. The artists have manually manufactured, with the aid of a photocopier, an artwork of public electronic space for the public physical space of DCA.

GALLERY 1

Flipped Clock, 2009

Modified digital clock

Flipped Clock is a modified digital clock display, where each individual digit is rotated by 180 degrees. The result is a fully functioning and accurate clock, but one which de-familiarizes us from 'clock time'. *Flipped Clock* reminds us that this omnipresent system of measurement is itself a human artifice and once again, even if it is for a moment, viewers are given an opportunity to glimpse 'clock time' from the outside again.

The Time Machine in Alphabetical Order, 2010

Single channel video, 96m55s

The Time Machine in Alphabetical Order is a complete rendition of the 1960 film version of the HG Wells' 1898 novella, re-edited by Thomson & Craighead into alphabetical order from beginning to end. The artists view this appropriation as an attempt to perform a version of time travel on the movie's original timeline through the use of a system of classification. Thomson & Craighead describe this experiment as using what they have decided to call 'a constrained editing technique' in reference to the literary artistic movement Oulipo, who made works through the use of constrained writing techniques. The very way in which we consume culture is also referenced: a late Victorian book is adapted for a mid-20th century feature film and remade and presented through computers.

GALLERY 2

Corruption, 2013

Lenticular prints, light boxes

These newly commissioned photographic light boxes each display twelve frames taken from a corrupt video file found online - a file intended to put a virus onto the downloader's computer. In searching out these glitches, malfunctions and distortions, the artists represent them as aesthetic propositions, reminding us that the act of looking itself distorts our perception of reality. Lenticular printing enables the artists to show multiple images that animate as the viewer moves in space. The non-representational abstract patterns come from a source more often used to capture representational imagery.

The First Person, 2013

Generative video, endless

The First Person is a stream of statements taken from American self-help websites intercut with a video of a burning house. An endless stream of first person statements are randomly intercut with a found video of a burning house. The artists state that "the resulting narrative is a never ending symbolic address that the viewer always seems to join midway. It is an endless cinematic plateau-state with all its constituent parts phasing against each other like a piece of minimalist music."

Belief, 2012

Two channel digital installation, 12m30s

Belief is made from information found entirely on the world wide web. This two-screen installation presents a series of fragmented broadcasts about belief, all sourced from the video sharing community YouTube. A compass floor projection interacts with the montage, showing where each clip originated in relation to the geographical location of the artwork. With a little help from Google Earth, viewers are placed at the centre point of this cinematic data visualisation. *Belief* is the final work in Thomson & Craighead's *Flat Earth Trilogy*, following on from *Flat Earth* (2007) and *A Short Film About War* (2009/2010).

Supported by Creative Scotland's Vital Spark programme, New Media Scotland's Alt-w Fund, ATLAS Arts and Animate Projects. Software development by Matthew Jarvis, sound design by John Cobban and script development by Alison Craighead, Jon Thomson and Steve Rushton. Graphic design by Cavan Convery.

A Short Film About War, 2009/2010

Two channel video, 9m39s

A Short Film About War is a narrative documentary artwork made entirely from information found on the world wide web. Viewers witness a variety of war zones as seen through the collective eyes of the online photo sharing community Flickr, and as witnessed by a variety of existing military and civilian bloggers. As the ostensibly documentary 'film' plays itself out, a second screen logs the provenance of images, blog fragments and GPS locations of each element comprising the work, so that the same information is simultaneously communicated to the viewer in two parallel formats - on one hand as a dramatised reportage and on the other hand as a text log. In offering this tautology, Thomson & Craighead are attempting to explore and reveal the way in which information changes as it is gathered, edited and then mediated through networked communications technologies or broadcast media.

Developed with help from New Media Scotland and Alt-w. Script by Jon Thomson, Alison Craighead and Steve Rushton.

Trooper, 1998

Single channel video, 5m24s

Trooper is a short video work, where a news report taken from a CNN webcast is both repeated and sped up systematically. In doing so, the authority of the seemingly factual, neutral newscast is eroded, de-constructed and ultimately exposed as a fictive conceit. In a review published in March 2004, the critic Sarah Kent said, "Most compelling is Thomson & Craighead's *Trooper*. A snatch of American television news shows a traffic cop drag a woman from a car at gunpoint, shove her to the ground and handcuff her. 'The woman sustained bruises and scratches and pleaded guilty to speeding', says the commentator. With each repeat, the clip is speeded up until the voices squeak like Donald Duck; reality strays into the territory of cartoons and cowboy films."

Six Years of Mondays, 2013

Single channel video, 11m29s

Six Years of Mondays is a documentary artwork about a man in the Scottish Kingdom of Fife who loves the weather. Graham Smith has been making time-lapse recordings of the view from his bedroom window every day from 6am to 6pm since 2006. This short video work takes us through a visualisation of six years of Mondays where each 'year' is soundtracked differently, offering a range of contexts from which this contemplative landscape can be viewed.

Supported by Fife Contemporary Art & Craft. Special thanks to Diana Sykes, Annette MacTavish and Graham Smith.

All works are courtesy of the artists and Carroll / Fletcher, London.

RELATED TALKS & EVENTS

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

Artists' Talk

Wed 15 January, 11:00
Cinema. Free, drop in.
Thomson & Craighead discuss their collaborative practice in this lecture presented in association with DJCAD, where they both studied.

Meet the Artists

Fri 17 January, 18:30
Galleries. Free, but please book in advance.
Join the artists and Clive Gillman, DCA Director, for an introductory conversation and sneak preview of the exhibition.

Live Music: Cam Deas

Fri 14 February, 19:30
Galleries. Tickets £5.
A special set by Cam Deas, with support from Usurper. London-based Cam Deas manipulates and processes an acoustic guitar to create dense sonic environments. Programmed by Cry Parrot with support from PRS New Music Plus.

Senior Citizen Kane Exhibition Tour and Blether

Wed 19 February, 10:30-12:00
Galleries. Free, but please book in advance.
This event is especially for our visitors aged 60 and over. Explore the exhibition with a Gallery Assistant, learn more about the artists and then join us for a cup of tea and a chat.

BSL Signed Exhibition Tour

Wed 19 February, 13:30
Free but please e-mail community.education@dca.org.uk to book your place.

Join us for an informal BSL signed tour followed by a cup of tea and a chat. We will have plenty of time to explore the exhibition, ask questions and share ideas, supported by registered sign language interpreter, Jennifer Ramsay.

(((echo)))

Thu 6 March, 18:30
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.

Big data, small screen

Tue 11 March, 12:00-16:00
Meeting Room. Free, but please book in advance.
We are drowning in big data. But how do we make creative sense of it? At this event we will hear from artists Thomson & Craighead who will give insights into their own response to data; and from artist Aidan Moesby, currently working with DCA on the *Dundee feels* project supported as part of Project Ginsberg. Insights will also be provided by other speakers including University of Dundee Fellows Sarah Cook and Drew Hemment. This event is suitable for both a general and an academic audience who may be interested in the ways in which artists are exploring this field.

FOR YOUNGER VISITORS & FAMILY GROUPS

Digital Art Jam

Sat 1 March, 12:00-16:00

Free, drop in.

Join the art jam for a taste of digital art making in Dundee! We will have hands on coding for beginners, live activity online and exciting ways to create sound, drawings and portraits for the digital age.

Art Cart Adventures

Sat 8,15 & 22 February, 8 &15 March, 13:00-15:00. Free, drop in.

Fun for all ages and family groups in particular, Art Cart offers active ways to discover the exhibition via drawing, making your own badge and exploring the new words we have as a result of our ever-evolving digital culture.

Activity Room DIY

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

DCA Activity Room is a comfortable and imaginative space designed for younger visitors and family groups to have a go at DIY activities and to make connections with the exhibition. This winter you can expect to find activities about time and the wonderful words that describe our digital world.

CREATIVE SKILLS FOR 11-16 YEAR OLDS

On Your Marks, Get Set, Draw

Mon 20 January (6 week course), 18:00-20:00. Tickets £36.

Expand your drawing skills on this

six week course. Use a wide range of materials and get to grips with a diverse selection of subjects from portraiture to data, inspired by Thomson & Craighead. This is a great way to build your portfolio!

Message Me: Stencil, Print, Stamp and Vinyl

Tue 4 February (4 week course), 18:00-20:00. Tickets £32.

Translate your ideas into strong text and image designs using stencils, vibrant vinyl, screen and stamp techniques. The exhibition will give us our starting inspiration with its' base in the world of the internet.

ARTISTS' CHOICE SCREENING

Wings Of Desire

Der Himmel über Berlin

Sun 9 March, 11:00. Cinema.

Wim Wenders returned to a still divided Germany to make this beautiful film, which won him the prize for Best Director at the 1987 Cannes Film Festival. *Wings of Desire* is an imaginative portrait of Berlin as seen through the eyes of two angels: Damiel (Bruno Ganz) and Cassiel (Otto Sander). As they keep watch over the city, the angels come to realise they may have underestimated the simple pleasures of physical existence.

Dir: Wim Wenders / West Germany & France 1987/ Digital / German with English / subtitles / PG/ 128 minutes.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

A new catalogue on Thomson & Craighead, *Flat Earth*, is available from DCA Shop at a special price.

Special launch price £20.00
(£25.00 regular price)

Published on the occasion of Thomson & Craighead's solo exhibitions at MEWO Kunsthalle, Memmingen, Germany and DCA, Dundee. The publication, edited by Dundee Fellow Sarah Cook, complements both shows by presenting a timely and detailed survey of their works. The book contains a foreword by Axel Lapp, essays by Sarah Cook and DCA Director Clive Gillman as well as an interview with the artists by Steve Rushton.

ARTIST EDITIONS

Limited edition artworks by Thomson & Craighead have been produced in close collaboration with DCA Print Studio.

Contact Britta Funck for more information:

britta.funck@dca.org.uk

NEXT EXHIBITION

Navid Nuur
RENDERENDER

Sat 29 March - Sun 15 June 2014

An exhibition of magical mixed media installations by the acclaimed Iranian-born Dutch artist.

JUST ASK

Our friendly Gallery Assistants are always happy to help with any exhibition related queries and questions.

Keep up to date with the very latest news and information from DCA by visiting our website, www.dca.org.uk, or by following us on Twitter or Facebook.