

Clear sticky-tape

This particular object has little material value but holds memory. It instils what happened that night, when we filled the central cabinet with haze from a hired haze machine, and placed Riccardo within it. A sound piece was played and this, together with Riccardo’s movement in the cabinet, was the exhibition’s opening performance.

I will now read a somewhat abstracted version of what happened that night, from the perspective of the audience or the tape itself.

Mist, major MAJOR mist or... haze, yes... haze.
The cabinet was full to the edges.

Each part of glass has its breaks, its hinges... its sliding effect.

This means gaps, gaps from which haze yes haze not mist escapes.

The cabinet was air tight with clear tape carefully adhered to these gaps.

The haze not mist but haze stays inside for longer, hiding his hide, champion made solid through movement.

His movement becomes fluid yet shifts the volume in the cabinet, making less room for the haze, yes, haze.

The material, not gas not liquid is not solid, finds smaller gaps and expels from the cabinet at the sides and from the roof. Whisks, which crawl out, in to exterior.

You see him more in his revealing—he moves, some shapes and angles repeated, others appearing random yet economically and learnedly executed. Animal in form, human in exploration.

Not solid not gas the haze condenses on the glass. He saw them all, pulled out of hypnotic state. He looked at them, sometimes straight in the eye ...those shifted hypnotised eyes.

He draws them in reverse of themselves, on his side of the glass using the wetness inside. Their eyes shift, lower and rise.

At the end of it all the clear tape is stripped from the cabinet, the floor is like sweat. Condensation, using gravity as its accomplice, runs down the glass onto the horizontal surface.

Slippery wet and... sweat. (Pause from speaking, walk slowly out into the audience)

The clear tape, rolled into homogenous shape could have been discarded. Sat, like rubbish on the floor after the performance, in quiet of, everyone gone. (Pause from speaking, pretend to pick up take from floor)

He picked me up... walked around the third cabinet, slid open the right most glass pane being careful not to leave finger marks on the surface... he placed my clear tape on the floor of the cabinet, and closed the pane again.

What rubbish has value behind this door? Does tape have memory in this setting? What other remnant of this trapping of gas not mist but haze, is here after two months of new air and dust blown in?

Mounted slide photographs with glass lenses

Go further down the Cowgate, down onto Holyrood Road.

Go further down Holyrood to a glass-fronted bar, perfect for big parties.

Some of the glass in this bar is covered in old card mounted slide photographs.

One of these slides sits here, next to another mounted in plastic that was taken in 2014, in Derbyshire. In his home town during an adventure to track the source and ending of the river Drone, which runs from the Peak District and flows east into a canal.

“How far does the water run?”, he said

“Too far”, he replied, “and too much industry, also, we are unsure of how to frame its beginning.”

The two slides are somewhat similar in what they depict.

On top of the slides are glass parts from a slide projector. Each is used for reasons unknown to him, in order to both flip and amplify the image as light is thrown from a bulb, through a complex run of mechanisms, onto the slide – projecting the image out through a lens, and out on to a chosen surface.

The convex circular piece of glass acts like a magnifier, the image underneath can be observed but not clearly, it is filtered.

The square and tinted blue piece of glass gives the image underneath a slight bit of shade, it obscures the content of the image making it harder to observe.

Each piece of glass has a function, just as each photograph has a memory of place.

Derbyshire... in its plastic mount, the north-eastern tip of it slotted into the border of South Yorkshire, rammed into the Pennines.

The source of the image mounted in card is still unknown, but the memory of the glass fronted bar good for parties remains, as do the memories of getting there. Following Holyrood after reaching the end of Cowgate.

These four objects sit here as a set, together they become a telling of a story...

In fact, all of this depends upon the light in the room. The lighter it is, the more the glass reflects, and the harder it is to get at these objects, even though they’re the closest to the glass itself – and therefore closer to the audience.

I’m thinking of the adventure tracking the river Drone. My home-town is named after the river, yet the river itself is quite hard to find. I made the adventure with my father, over the course of a day. I used 35mm slide film to take pictures of our findings. Locations we thought the river should be, exposures near its course if taking a picture of the river was unpractical, really good images of the actual water that really just turned out crap because of the limitations of the camera.

Looking at all of these slides as a set. They all appear the same and don’t tell much of a story. In some of them you can see my dad, smiling at the camera or dashing to try and exit the frame. At one point I persuaded him to climb through a hedgerow with me, off a main road into a field. From there I zoomed in, on to a dam – the place we suspected the river might have started on the borders of the town. Together we plunged into the leaves wading through branches. Later, hay fever hit me hard, and the search ended because I stopped being able to see.

Really this selected slide means nothing as an image by itself, its quality only resonates when another image is placed next to it, in conversation with it. And this could be an image far out of context, the only commonality being form, apparent similarities – like zodiac, or sexuality.

I think, well, the lenses sit nicely on top of both mounted slides, as objects they go together, they speak the same language. Yet, what should give light and clarity to the contents of the slides, the images themselves, at this point erases.

The lenses block rather than enhance. It becomes more about surface.

Fur hat and clock

Take this fir hat for instance. The item was acquired from a friend named Eira.

The two of them ripped north up the A82 from Glasgow, in a bright yellow 70s soft-top Spitfire. Pavements became ripped too, they went that fast. They listened to Pavement too, she was into Indie bands. And they listened to Pati Smith, other bits, all on cassette tape, loud as the ripping wind drowned out much noise.

But not the noise of the engine that roared in between each shift of gears.

The boot of the spitfire was small but they fitted in many things.

Cameras and tripods to record with, supplies. Costumes too, including this soft fur hat...

At Ardlui, they found an inn with a free car park and pulled the Spitfire to a halt. After emptying the boot and loading supplies onto backs and shoulders, they set off down a track, running down away from the road.

A shallow stream emerged... as they walked further ...this would be one of the many tributaries for the Loch they ripped along earlier, using the A82, burning rubber.

Looking ahead did not reveal the direct course of the stream. Overhanging trees lined their route. One after the other revealing trunks and branches full of leaves, as the path took a long bow-like curve.

A short while longer, as their tread got heavy and the supplies became heavier still, there was a break in the trees and the tributary ran shallow into a small dam of white rocks that appeared hand placed.

The result of this placing and manipulating of water, a dark and still pool not unlike a kidney in shape, fed by one other stream flowing in from the left as they directed their sight onwards.

The water was sedimented and still, ...yet fresh and full.

They could tell it was so, as here they took down the supplies from their shoulders, removed their shoes and socks, rolled up their trousers not without effort, and walked with more effort... across the stones... and in to the ...kidney’s edge.

Some of the stones here were much larger than others. The biggest ones good enough for resting on and securing supplies. Onto the white surface they placed bottles of water, the cameras and tripods. They kept food in their bags, to keep it cool, there was no shelter from the sun here, the trees being too far from the rocks.

The costumes and other items, including this here fur hat, as well as three flattened red Chinese lanterns, were kept in two plastic bags.

They sat and took a deep drink from one of the water bottles.

She set up her camera and tripod facing back away from the kidney and towards the inn. He looked further away from the inn still, beyond the dark pool and into a field beyond.

The fur hat was taken from the bag along with the lanterns.

He placed the hat on his head and took out metal frames for the lanterns. Each frame was placed inside a lantern, making it whole, transforming it spherical.

The red of them did not fit the prescriptively romantic colours of their surroundings. And they did not float in the water.

Specifically... the red did not fit the green and brown of the field beyond the pool, he knew this, as he ventured that far.

With fur hat on, quite animal-like, and with the three lanterns attached to a large three-pronged branch, he walked into the field. A short-looking deer stood there amongst grass, silent, looking right in to his eyes he recalls, right deep into his eyes.

You might have been able to time how long he stood there, and how long the deer stared. Their poised confrontation could have lasted minutes, or just seconds.

The lanterns looking irregular, swaying slowly.

The road and the Spitfire seemed faster...

I think of Eira now, I have not heard from her in some time and she is not on Facebook.

The other day I looked through her boyfriend’s pictures on Facebook instead, looking for traces of her existence, any snapshots of them at parties or gigs together.

They moved to London after getting together in Glasgow. This was back in 2012 or so – I can’t remember exactly when.

Her boyfriend used to play in an indie band in, that’s sort of how they met.

After around ten Internet minutes of mining the pictures on his uploads, I found her. They were sat together in a large audience on what looked like hay bails.

She was wearing sunglasses, just like the ones she’d wear in the Spitfire when driving.

Perhaps it was some wedding, or a festival. They were definitely observing and reacting to something, because they were laughing.

I started this search through Eira’s boyfriend’s Facebook pictures because I was writing this text, thinking about the hat, how she leant it me and I just never really got round to giving it back.

It has appeared in a number of works, wearing it gives me the ability to become something else – some character. Really, it just takes me back to this time near Ardlui.

A week ago, on the 27th of February, myself and two others drove up to the same inn.

An updated visit makes me realise a mistake in the above story. The inn is actually beyond Ardlui itself and just before a campsite where you can hire wooden tipis.

Parking at the inn, you can see hills either side of you. One side is more exposed than the other and you can clearly see a waterfall high up and set in to the landscape.

From the car park and whilst on the track, the waterfall is silent. But if you make it up the hill, which we did, Eira and me, you lose sight of the water and become increasingly deafened by its cacophony.

There is no clear path up to it. I recall we actually scaled the hill, mostly through bracken, wearing no shoes or socks. Finally, I remember, we reached level soft ground sheltered by more trees.

We walked out from under the leaves and branches, and the water opened up in front of us.

Around fifteen minutes was spent then scaling slate-like rock down to the waterfall’s edge. Dangerous, but we were barefoot and could use our toes like fingers to find the way down feet first.

We sat for a good while then, at the brink of the rock face looking straight into the water, enraptured by its force.

I don’t think I was wearing this hat, at the time.

12. standing. mirror.

i look, i shy away. i stop. looking. at you. stop. please stop.

the kid wanted to get a nike sweater as a present, but got a champion one instead. here’s the champion

I search, I fight, I lose at the root conflicted within trapped beneath

i look in the glass. i look for myself i look in the class. a million identities won’t make my one any valid. a strengthening hope, the trouble with growing

and the smell of his armpits, and his arms, and his nipples, his nals, his eyelids, his saliva, his nipples, his crotch, his spunk

hairs appearing like new grass on a winter field of soft fertile soil kept in a glass house, like spiky threads needling through the fabric, growing, slowly evolving, the liquids flowing through, looking for their paths, rearranging in the form of their future shape, from root stretching out to the sky, tiresome process of building, from pebble to pebble, brick to brick, cell to cell.

you old champion, in your cotton i can smell the history of my teenage sweat of the fatigue of growing of working my way up of the ground, the formless, the foetus of the plastic soles of trainers, the smell of fake, flashy, sellable, of the synthetic lighting of a sports shop in the 90’s you smell of fog, of a recognisable fix landscape of a city with ghostly invariable faces

wearing my history, hiding in my skin protecting and revealing. concealing and undressing. i look, i shy away. an animal stuck in its own hide, its cave. a puppy piercing through its placenta.

champion of my skin, of my scars, champion of my heart. memories of me. love.

Aliases, filters

I am trying to get at this notion of anxiety and realise I create filters instead, as everybody does. This object is the base of my grandfather’s old desktop PC. It sat with the weight of a heavy monitor on top, on a wide desk specifically designed to have enough surface area for a keyboard and mouse – the tower for the PC existed underneath somewhere, you could hear it, you know this, buzzing away next to your feet.

I am getting closer to this anxiety through the very object. It is designed to hold weight, a monitor’s worth of weight. Think of one of these monitors, now so much bigger than necessary – large but ample and full of memory looking passed just what appears on screen. Think of the desk it sat on, where this desk would be – perhaps in a study, or in a living room. The desk was shared, as was the monitor, and its contents. The tower, still remaining unthinkable but not silent at your feet, is occasionally touched when brushed by a toe or a fidgeting ankle.

I know what this anxiety is; it has something to do with acceptance. Boldly but not publicly I discovered who I was, when using one of these towers, one of those monitors, which sat heavy on a base just like this one. It looks simple I know, but its existence has a lot to answer for. History is something you can erase, but it turns out I didn’t know how to do this at the time.

This anxiety is now updated, and has been transferred to something introverted, something I keep closer than I sometimes realise. The base has been used as an instrument beyond its design, to make sound when plucked and slid, when moved and shook. These sounds were mixed and filtered into a story I recorded about my first-hand experience of taking part in a gathering with The Radical Faeries of Albion. Sounds profound, and it was, but whilst there I found myself taken apart.

I have not mentioned the word gay in this story. Perhaps I don’t need to. Perhaps ‘gay’ is another filter, another objectification to sit with, make sound with, tell stories about. Stories are filters.

I have mentioned the word anxiety a lot. Perhaps I needed to. Perhaps ‘anxiety’ is an excuse, another simplification to reason with, make confessions with, tell stories about. Stories are filters.

Weapons from La Roche film

Memory of place is not always told from a well accurate photograph taken of the place.

Objects found in places can act as memories too.

This thick cable would kill us all and usually runs at length under concrete so it does not kill us all.

This piece is black. It has more black running inside along with red and a little white. It would kill anyone with enough force behind it, with the right sort of well accurate blow.

It was found in Polwarth, on Polwarth Crescent, just before the bridge over the Union Canal in the west of Edinburgh, which was well accurately engineered to run goods in and out of the city.

On its northern end, the bridge marks a change in borough. From Polwarth to Fountain Park.

These names, and their etymologies, are perhaps unknown to us. But they surely have some connection with the well accurate canal that divides them – industry, commerce, trade.

The thick high-voltage cables run under ground and connect each place regardless of name or history. They are links providing power. They remain buried, and only become objects when dug up and severed. Here their story is researched and displayed.

The small piece of potentially long cable sits next to a rock shaped piece of hardened clay, wrapped around a mask of solid plaster.

I used to live in Polwarth, on Polwarth Crescent, in a top floor flat but moved after eight months, due to a rise in rental price. The bridge was significant, a lot happened there personally; it’s also where I found the cable.

You could see the bridge from my bedroom, easily watch people walk up and down the road changing from one borough to another – perhaps unknowingly.

This object, the clay and the plaster, I made in my bedroom after clearing most of my belongings out before the move.

At the centre of the piece is packed a pencil drawing. This can be seen slightly on the exterior of the object.

Also at the centre, is an entombed wasp. My room seemed to collect dead wasps. They would fly in through the bay window and not escape.

Both objects were used as weapons to pretend kill collaborators in a film. Let’s think about the voltage that would run through, indicating how these people would reach their demise – if fiction became reality...

Do these gloves we wear act as a filter for such applicability?

We spent a lot of time erasing the marks we made, the prints from fingers left on glass, scoring out and polishing aside traces of presence.

It seemed everything we took away was replaced by some other finger mark, and everything changed with the light, even as the outside grew darker filling reflective space with streetlights, takeaway signs, and traffic lights.

When the outside goes dark and the interior stays light, the whole laboratory becomes cabinet-like – viewable from its exterior, from across the street or in the park where Riccardo and myself first sat cross-legged adjacent to one another.

The bench we found, faced into the Meadows, away from the tennis courts and university. Riccardo spoke of how all objects have potential movement, and that through movement comes transformation or relativity.

He took his mobile and used it as a fan in his hand, motioning it next to his face. He took it and used it as a phone too – slight change in motion, its function reverting to original status.

Last Monday morning I cut my hand open, absentmindedness bloody almost everywhere. My left hand thank goodness, not the right, which I use most often. I think Riccardo is right-handed too?

Many of the objects here are hand-sized, made using the hand, hand-held and dexterously movable.

Riccardo’s movements imply his feet have the same presence as hands, well-practiced each shift allowing toes to be fingers, if they want that sort of definition.

Quite animal in form, transformative again.

I’m dissecting all of this now and thinking of the room. What dissections took place here before and how much of that involved gears and instruments controlled by hands?

Some of you are wearing white gloves today; they act as a barrier between your skin, which might leave a mark on something like glass, and the objects you hold.

Perhaps the gloves allow you to be transformed too, allow you to be more tentative and delicate.

In your hand we have placed the corpse of a bee – no one has touched this bee apart from Thomas, the gallery technician, and me. Our skin has made little difference to its appearance. Feel special taking this dead body, look at it, how is it framed now in your white palm?

Making takes hands to make. Usually two hands maybe at times just one, or a collection perhaps three if needed. The black putty used to hold a broken zip from a Nivea sports bag, has finger marks in it, you can tell, its been pushed at, morphed a little, bits have been ripped off. Two lozenges have been secured in its back, the side with the Nivea tag being, obviously, the front!

Hands will now be used to take the putty and change its form, preparing it for transformation. The bee is needed for this...