

Signals

Artists' Programme Newsbulletin

September 2020 Vol 1. No.1

The Artists' Programme Newsbulletin expands on the conversation from our monthly meetings, documenting shared interests and concerns with reference and research material. Inspired by Signals Newsbulletin (1964-1966), each issue will focus on one of the following areas: Art and Technology; Art and Science; Art and Architecture; Art and the entire environment.

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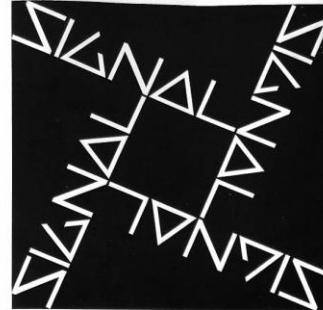
Genevieve Rudd

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Edited by Nell Croose Myhill

Art and Technology

Each month, a group of up to 20 artists meet to take part in peer-led projects and workshops informed by the Sainsbury Centre context, exploring working from collections or working with people. In spring 2020, as the UK entered a period of lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we asked how we could continue to collaborate. Over the following months, the Artists' Programme looked to historical examples of remote collaborative art projects for models of how to work together.



“The actual origin of civilization depended on the simultaneous mastery or possession of a number of techniques, some new, some old, which taken together, sufficed to turn man from a primitive animal into a being capable of producing food. A permanent surplus of food is the necessary basis for the emergence of civil society. The greater concentrations of population became possible, urban life began, and the primitive village was overwhelmed by the mighty cities. The fundamental techniques were the domestication of animals, agriculture, horticulture, pottery, brickmaking, spinning, weaving and metallurgy. These cities of trading and co-operating with nature sometimes a revolution in man's science and a revolution in his way of life. The first area where civilization based its domination on the sciences was the river valleys of the Nile, the Euphrates, and the Indus. The vital period in which the new techniques were developed is roughly the two millennia from 6000 to 4000 B.C.”

“When history is really taught it is ought to be taught in the knowledge of man's character, and in the history of the material world, the true story of human society, one of the most fundamental lessons will be the concrete and detailed exposition of the means of this great revolution in man's control over his environment. The film, the museum, the workshop, the lecture, the library will combine to make the significance of these four thousand years clear into the historical consciousness of mankind. This technical revolution constituted the material basis of ancient civilization. No comparable change in human destiny took place between it and the industrial revolution of the eighteenth century. The progress of the sciences, especially of the hard facts of physics and chemistry, and of Medicine, all rest on the technical achievement of the Neolithic Age. Their re-assembly to one another result from this fact. Their differences from us today are only understood when we realize that we are separated from them by the greatest great technical revolution, the coming of the Machine Age.”

Professor Benjamin Franklin
Great Science, Pelican Books, 1963

“Near the occupation, not the object to be manufactured, should be put in the foreground, but rather the recognition of man's organic nature for the great of man. Without great, without artistic, the man of the future is not a man of the future.”

Leopold Moholy-Nagy
Lectures on Design, Dover Publications, 1968

“Let us first of all kill our egotism. From now on only teams, groups, whole disciplines can create. Cooperation between scholars, engineers and technicians, industrialists, architects and designers will be the first condition of work.”

Victor Vasarely
“I feel there is a need to affirm that, in terms of the building of man's destiny, the only principles of construction are possible through painting and sculpture, we can extend the framework of creative vision and in the exploration, transformation and use of raw materials, we have an unlimited field upon which to develop new analogies between what exists in form, space, time, texture, dimensions and what grows in perception.”

Marcelo Salvadori
“Each material has its specific characteristics which we must understand if we want to use it. We must remember that everything depends on how we use a material, not on the material itself. And just as we must be familiar with materials, just as we must understand anatomy, so we must become familiar with the psychological and spiritual factors of our day. No cultural activity is possible otherwise. For we are dependent on the spirit of our time.”

Max van der Stoep
“As for me, I don't subscribe to any theory. I have no theories, only a certain way of life. I like these lines by Walt Whitman: Do I come-did I come? They will tell, I remember myself, on large, I contain multitudes.”

David Medalla
“I shall give up the use of colour, I think. I shall work with the perception of the model, the object with dots and lines, perhaps with their own blood, with the tip of plants, the colour of the earth and so on.”

Yves Klein
“This consequence brings us, in a future perhaps remote, towards the end of art as a thing separate from our surroundings, towards which is the actual plastic reality. But that end is at the same time a new beginning itself. ... And just as we must be familiar with materials, just as we must understand anatomy, so we must become familiar with the psychological and spiritual factors of our day. No cultural activity is possible otherwise. For we are dependent on the spirit of our time.”

Paul Mendheim
“The image of man is like the spectrum of a nebula, being its presence with its rays, yet never ready to solidify to full radiance or to pass through our gates.”

Naum Gabo
“The image of man is like the spectrum of a nebula, being its presence with its rays, yet never ready to solidify to full radiance or to pass through our gates.”

Stelio Takis
(Creator of modern andian happy Apollo in the Magnetron/Doctor of Notes Figure in the Lanes & Pontico of nuclear hearts)

Full follow-through
Creative process
Solving three dimensions
Simultaneously
In three half-second
Locations
Person's a high Degree
Of coordination
To all nuclear attitudes)
With other contributors
Operational realities
Stereotype performance
Full-field operation
Anywhere in the world

David Medalla,
Paris 1961

Takis Magnetic Sculpture, 1964

Signalz Newsbulletin of the Centre for Advanced Creative Study

Director: Paul Keeler
Vol. 1 No. 1 August 1964

NOVEMBER INAUGURATION OF CENTRE SHOWROOMS FOUR BLOCKS IN WINDSOR STREET, LONDON W.11. TAKIS RETROSPECTIVE AND LILIANE LUN.

Signalz, the name of our newsbulletin, was inspired by a series of needs advanced by the Greek artist Takis. Our symbol and the layout of this paper were designed by Keith Peles.

Price per copy of Signalz is one shilling and six pence.

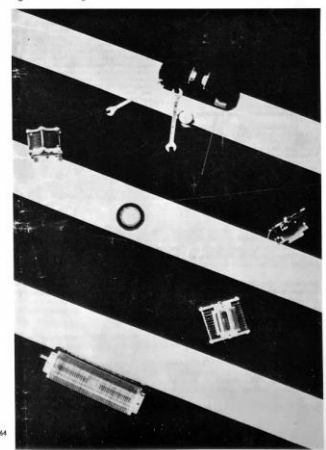
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of the artist's new developments in technology and science which might be of assistance in the formation of the artist's discipline, in the choice of his materials and the improvement of his technique.

We hope to provide a forum for all those who believe passionately in the correlation of the arts and Art's imaginative integration with technology, science, architecture and our entire environment.

We believe that such an integration can only be accomplished by most rigorous means: by the exercise of the highest aesthetic standards, and where society gives to the artist its available material, its support, —and complete freedom in the pursuit of his (the artist's) art.



Takis Magnetic Sculpture, 1964

In autumn 2020, the group turned their attention to Signals, an experimental gallery space based in London from November 1964 to October 1966. It began its life as the ‘Centre for Advanced Creative Study’, before changing its name to Signals. The gallery presented artists who were working across art and technology in its broadest sense, and each exhibition was called a ‘pilot’ – a space to experiment and generate new ideas. Alongside the exhibitions, the gallery produced a newsbulletin. The newsbulletin was a way of expanding ideas generated in the exhibition programme. It brought together the collected ideas and interests of an artist community from all over the world. The newsbulletin brought together different voices and perspectives around ideas of art and its “imaginative integrations with technology, science, architecture and the entire environment”. This newsbulletin takes a broad understanding of technology, exploring the application of mechanisms, tools or processes in art practice. This could include industrial, hand-made or computer technologies.

Artist in Focus: Genevieve Rudd

Anthotype Prints, September 2020



Prising open DIY contact frames holding photographic prints made of kitchen scraps, plants grown from seed or rotten bits of fruit is domestic, small and homespun. In the context of COVID, the domestic sphere has grown larger in all of our lives to become the enforced main focus of our time and energy. The big reveal after days or weeks of waiting and watching Anthotype photography to develop in the sun (and rain, wind, damp mornings...) is thrilling, not just because lockdown has closed in possibilities for external stimulation from a 'busy' life, but because it feels – to me – connected to something bigger.

Experimenting with this technique has allowed me to process witnessing bare supermarket shelves and hearing political battles over providing free meals to children in poverty during the school holidays. It has kept me connected with the consistent cycle of seasons, light and nature. It has allowed

me to apply my personal principles about limiting waste and consciously using sustainable materials in my practice.

Wood sorrel growing through the path in my garden, chard grown from seed, marigold leaves, amaranth and abundant self-seeded raspberries became a semi-permanent record of sunlight from midday on Saturday 12th September to 3:30pm on Thursday 17th September.

I urge you to embrace the simplicity of domestic, small or homespun approaches as a way to adapt to the vast turmoil in the world.

1. Grind up plant-matter with a splash of liquid (e.g. white vinegar, water or alcohol)
2. Strain through cotton
3. Brush onto paper (e.g. watercolour paper)
4. Dry paper in a darkened space
5. Layer the coated paper and pressed plants (or other at objects) under glass, such as in a picture frame
6. Leave in direct sunlight outdoors for 5-7+ days or several weeks

Artist in Focus: Rach Anstey-Sanders

Tidal Prefelts, 2020



My studio is full of items picked up from one place or another; like the mudlarker Lara Maiklem, I have always been drawn to small discoveries. Collecting, sorting and categorising objects is a starting point for my work. Found items are often hand-sized and finished pieces are on a similar scale. Previous work has been inspired by dropped camera filters and discarded nests.

Accumulation feels right as a description of my overall process- adding layers of wool or found material or stitches or ideas. Technology I have used includes a laser jet printer, a

sewing machine and a domestic washing machine (often pushed to the limits of their capabilities). However, Tidal Prefelts (2020) were made using wave action at Winterton-on-Sea, Norfolk and hand nished.

I continue to think about how nature's forces move and accumulate material and how this might echo global movements of people as we react to political instability, climate change, war or pandemic.

My young children have a big impact on my work. They are conscientious collectors; handing me all sorts of treasures they think I missed. Their uninhibited exploration of objects and materials shows me new ways of working as we play.

Artists to look at

Thomás Saraceno recommended by Hannelore



Art imitating natural technologies

Thomás Saraceno is an Argentinian artist. His practice explores concepts that link art, life, science and social sciences. Recent work explores the technologies that spiders have evolved in web making and using vibrations – the way they ‘play’ their web. He in turn uses technology to create pieces that explore sound and vibrations caused by spiders movements in the web. Charting and sonifying the path of dust moved by the webs vibrations or subjecting spiders to different sound frequencies to see how this affects their web building and behavior. His exploration into the frequencies has culminated in interactive installations where the participant can pluck and play human scale web like structures.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05rgQUFPTjc>

Talking Pictures: Nicole Eisenman and A. L. Steiner, 2017 recommended by Nell

Talking Pictures was a project organised by The Met Museum, inviting artists to take part in Camera-Phone Conversations, sending still images and brief videos to each other to create a visual dialogue over a period of 5 months.

Talking Pictures is an example of artists working together, remotely.

<https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2017/talking-pictures>

Robert Rauschenberg performing Open Score, 1966, recommended by James

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Vg6hrxE-w00>

Robert Rauschenberg: Art and Technology, 1959–98, recommended by James

<https://www.rauschenbergfoundation.org/artist/art-and-technology-1959-98>



The Whale Watch 1993, Frank Stella recommended by Caroline

This is one of my favourites from the series of works Stella made in response to Moby-Dick. Stella said about the series, “A lot of the continuity in Melville is not so different from collage. Melville jumps from one idea to another, and the rhythm is so great and the imagery is so good, he puts it together and they work” Which describes how I feel about the book too! But it’s more than that – it was produced at Ken Tyler’s workshop. A master printmaker Tyler has developed techniques and technology to enable artists to produce technically breath-taking work, encouraging and pushing artists to make leaps in their practice.

<https://juddtully.net/interviews/monumental-maximalst-frank-stella>

Reading List

Lara Maiklem; Mudlarking; 2019 recommended by Rach

‘I have been bringing unusual objects home since I was a child – and I still feel the sharp pang of excitement at spotting something that’s unusual or out of place. It could be

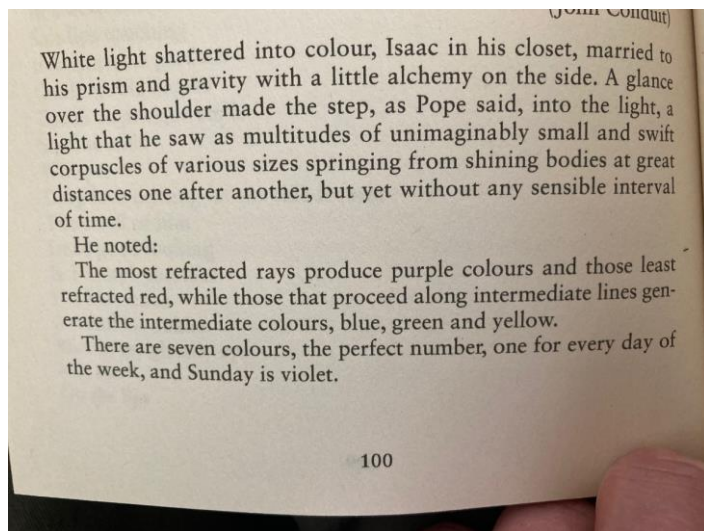
something as simple as a dry snakeskin I the grass or a piece of quartz in the mud – covetable objects in their own right but which take on a magical quality when found out of context. It's this magic that I try to capture by collecting them'.

Melissa Harrison 'Rain: Four Walks in English Weather' recommended by Genevieve

I'm recommending this book, although I think it might be cursed. Each day since collecting my order from the Book Hive, it has pissed it down in Great Yarmouth. Can anyone recommend a book about sunny weather?

(see: <https://melissaharrison.co.uk/books>)

Derek Jarman writing about Isaac Newton in Chroma, 1997, recommended by James



Hito Steyerl: In Defense of the Poor Image recommended by Nell

e-flux journal #10, November 2009

<https://www.e-flux.com/journal/10/61362/in-defense-of-the-poor-image/>