
Signals

Artists' Programme Newsbulletin

December 2020 Vol 1. No.4

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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Edited by Nell Croose Myhill

Art and the entire environment

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 Artist's Programme looked to historical examples of remote collaborative art projects for models of how to work together.

In the 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".

Art and the entire environment is the broadest theme in this series, for the purposes of this project it will explore the context we are working in. This could be a response to social, political or economic contexts or it could explore particular circumstances, settings or systems (such as language).

Artist in Focus: Christine Blackburn

It's quite simple - I draw the people and things I see around me. It's been going on for years, part documentary, part diary, part a way of being in the world, maybe mostly a way of being in the world. The act of drawing itself is a 'given' – it's a very focused, immediate, sensory, internal, tactile and exhilarating thing to do. I like the clarity and joy it brings. The subjects are more problematic. I flit about indecisively, but are drawn to situations where people are doing something together even though they may not be together, shopping car-boot sales, gigs, departure lounges - places where people share proximities and activities, which when looked from the side seem somehow unreal, surreal or super real or, as Henry put it, life as 'a sequence of odd moments'. I step into these places and people as a visible observer and I now realise I am desperate for them to be ok with me being there, so I am too polite. Covid has halted all this. Now everyone is a bio-hazard, shapes in the street we need to avoid. So over the last year I have found myself drawing dogs, usually dogs versus leash, I see dogs being opposite - pulling and pushing, determined to be, to do, joyous and thwarted all at once. I just wanted to

draw it so I did. As with everything else I have apologised for doing this, but now I see it has given me a push, I've enjoyed getting my eyes around new information, curves and edges, muscles and bone, claws and fur, movement and presence. Dogs don't care about me and what I do so I can do it for me (I learned that from Clare today).

I can use my materials - and the subject/source is simply one of those – to fulfil the need, to explore, contemplate, be, feel, and that feels good.



Dog on a lead, 2020

Artist in Focus: Clare Jarrett

At the time of the first lockdown, I was working towards a solo show at The Cut Arts Centre, Halesworth. With those particular spaces in mind I was making stuffed, hanging pieces, finding a calm, sometimes ominous feeling within the objects. The show has been delayed, rescheduled for 2021.

Over the last two weeks of May 2020, feeling very stuck indoors, at home with family members regrouping, I thought about Lorina Bulwer. I sat with everyone around and stitched a record of my Zoom activities, online meetings and classes, from the previous month or so, into a long, thin piece of work entitled *Zoom Archive*.

In Autumn, as things were shutting down again, I began experimenting with new materials. I started casting, learning to make moulds and resin objects. Interested in

found things, I picked up discarded fishermen's knots and off-cut wood blocks from the beach and wondered if I could make them as repeats.

For Outpost Studio Editions I made an edition of 6 knots, *Stop Knot*, and 6 blocks, *Off Cut*.





Artists to look at

Pina Bausch recommended by Clare



The Pina Bausch film is an hour long but is a kind of collage of lots of short bits of film, which are all really interesting. I particularly liked the part of the woman running barefoot through the snow under lots of barbed wire fences in a pink dress at 52:19 and the guys in dresses rollerskating around a ballroom (but I think it's all brilliant!!).

Die Klage Der Kaiserin - O Lamento da Imperatriz - PinaBausch- Trilha Africa la em Casa
<https://vimeo.com/213617600>

Collective Actions Films by Sabine Hänsgen recommended by Mike



'Action 33. "Russian World"'

These are stills from a film by Sabine Hänsgen, documenting performances by Moscow-based group 'Collective Actions' in 1985. This took place during one of the collective's 'Trips Out Of Town', meeting at pre-arranged rural destinations. As official state culture was regulated by strict censorship, activities such as this were only able to take place covertly. '...Actions here included a performer kicking a giant plywood hare, and another unspooling white thread, invisible in the snowy field where the performance took place'. In the political climate of Russia in the mid-1980s, Hänsgen's VHS documentation attempted to capture something which might otherwise go unseen or disappear from history. This is perhaps echoed by the performances themselves, which point towards an absurd sense of disappearance and destruction. Details of performances by Collective Actions:

<http://conceptualism.letov.ru/KD-ACTIONS-33.htm>

Interview with Sabine Hänsgen:

<https://artmargins.com/2015-08-28-00-33-52/>

The video itself was available online until the film was acquired by Tate in 2015:

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/collective-actions-haensgen-russian-world-t14345>

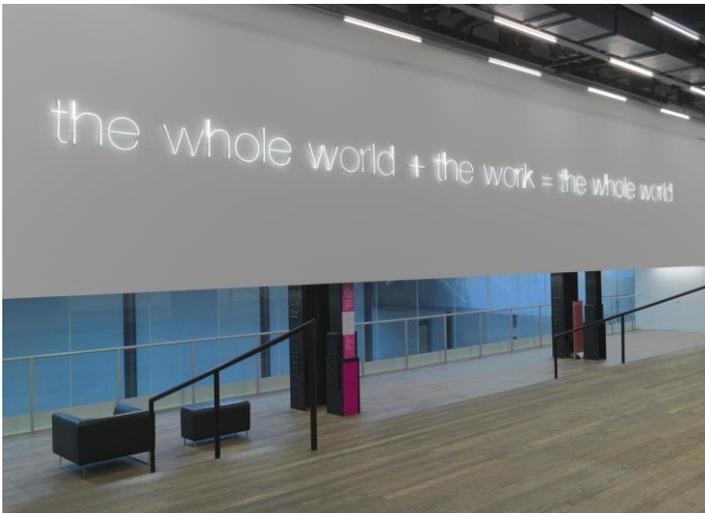
Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Hunters in the Snow. 1565 Recommended by Chris





I am spoilt for choice for artists old and new who create powerful work from specific shared human lives/experiences. I have chosen this one as it is so ubiquitous and familiar to us that it is easy to not really see it anymore. (Here it is at a car boot sale turned to a mirror). I saw it 'for real' a few years ago and it blew me away. The rich human content just keeps on giving, but main thing I love about it most is it's colour, space and distances, fleeting human activity under a vast blue grey sky that is still above us. I recommend checking out the link –it is cheaper and safer than a plane ticket to Vienna.

Martin Creed Work No. 232: the whole world + the work = the whole world 2000
recommended by James



Winnie Herbstein recommended by Nell
Winnie Herbstein makes work about gendered labour and workspaces. <https://winnieherbstein.com>

Ima-Abasi Okon recommended by Nell
Ima-Abasi Okon explores the ways language informs and complicates the construction of knowledge.
<http://www.imaokon.co.uk>

Reading List

“we account the whale immortal” Moby-Dick (Herman Melville 1851) recommended by Caroline

In Chapter 105: Does the Whale's Magnitude Diminish? – Will He Perish? Whale hunter Melville ponders on the fate of whales. In comparing them to the plains buffalo that are exterminated to near extinction he suggests that whales will survive because they are able to retreat to the safety of the polar seas where they cannot be hunted. It was the development of industrial whaling in that enabled these regions to be plundered and so Melville was right, and wrong. Chapter 105: Does the Whale's Magnitude Diminish?

<https://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/42/moby-dick/786/chapter-105-does-the-whales-magnitude-diminish-will-he/>

Per Kirkeby -The Writer by Eric Steffensen, recommended by Clare

Tate publishing 2009

Unidentified foreign objects, Phyllida Barlow in conversation with Elizabeth Fisher recommended by Clare

On Not Knowing, how artists think, Elizabeth Fisher and Rebecca Fortnum, Kettle's Yard, UAL, Black Dog Publishing 2013

Louise Bourgeois Autobiographical Prints recommended by Clare

Hayward Publishing, Southbank Centre, London SE1 8XX

Gilgamesh, a new English version by Stephen Mitchell recommended by Clare

Profile Books 2005.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Epic-of-Gilgamesh>

In Our Time, podcast BBC radio 4 Epic of Gilgamesh recommended by Clare

www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b080wbrq