

Always and Again

The performance should make clear to the listener that the hearing of the piece is his own action - that the music, so to speak is his rather than the composer's - John Cage 4'33"

On entering the exhibition *Always and Again*, through the darkened space you orientate yourself to view three video works simultaneously, the fourth is skewed as it faces the opposing direction. As your gaze flips from one video to another the exhibition slowly reveals itself, you view the work both collectively and individually. What you have perceived to be the audience, move through the space and interact with the pieces revealing that they are performers/participants in the exhibition. The performers are choreographed by floor markings within the gallery space and respond to the video works; they physically hold a monitor, they adorn themselves with objects from the exhibition, each gesture repeated by the performers. The implication for the audience is that you become unwitting participants. As an art audience we have become versed in this letting go when we encounter this form of participatory enactment. There is an ancient Greek term Kairos that is used in relation to this passive encounter made possible by a will to let go and the enjoyment of the serendipity of the event.



The dynamic of the exhibition also changes as the sequence of the video works are not limited to one monitor, they are alternated through out the space providing this rotational pull as you go through the exhibition, as viewer you too become performer in the process of 'doing' through watching, listening and moving through the space. The repetition and rhythms of the exhibition are enhanced by the overlapping sounds and the slippage between live and recorded performance within the video works. This activation of the exhibition is an important element as it creates cohesion and linkages between elements of the works. One becomes aware of how you occupy the space and creates a tension between the audience and performer but through

observation the structure and score of the exhibition becomes prevalent and you become part of it.

Laura Cooper, who curated the exhibition and is one of the artists, her work *Divine Intervention* (2013) documents an intervention involving a market stallholder in Ridley Road Market, London. The scene feels familiar as the ubiquitous green and white fabric that typically covers market stall is constructed and deconstructed, the green stripe has been replaced with gold paint and the stall becomes luminous, and somewhat performative in its movement throughout the video. This public gesture is a subtle presence, a space borrowed for a transient moment.



On another screen you see Robert Crosse's film *Team Roedale* [2012], the quick repetitive head movements of a group of working class men transfixed in their preoccupation, the film slowly reveals that the men are engrossed with slot car racing', the editing of the film is cleverly done as their movements seem quite comical at first as they move in unison and as a viewer you try to construct the unseen and what would create this balletic movement. The men operate in this other space where the movement of the cars suspends their daily lives momentarily, it is a poignant piece that is a reminder of different rituals that are part of our everyday lives that allow us to suspend ourselves from reality for these instances.

Séamus McCormack's video work is concerned with the mechanics of theatrics, the use of illumination in not only highlighting objects but also the subject. The exhibition is lit by the screens which in turn illuminate the performers and the subjects within the works, this illumination from the screens also dictates how one moves within the exhibition space, as McCormack's video illustrates the importance of illuminating aspects and shadowing others, the center of attraction is displaced between the encounter of the performers, the screens and their subjects.

Ian Giles' video *The Clarinet Player* (2011) is located in a recording studio, the woman narrating recounts the story of a clarinet player who loses the use of his hand, as the story is repeatedly recounted the words begin to be replaced by percussion instruments or silence as the clarinet player loses the use of his hand the narrator loses her voice to be interpreted by music and silence as with a performed composition the sounds relay the emotion of the story.



The exhibition's intention is to question whether authentic rituals can be instigated and represented in the context of the gallery space. The collaborative aspect of the exhibition where the artists came together to create a performance installation is essential to how the exhibition is interpreted, the separation of the artist from its audience is mediated through this performance and creates a collective experience that enhances both the artworks and the experiential nature of the exhibition. Through the artists' collective collaboration the exhibition forms the gestalt.

Mary Cremin, August 2014