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Between tracks

Fletcher, BA

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Between Tracks

19th June – 18th July

The Salford Restoration Office & The International 3

Between Tracks is an exhibition by nine artists from Britain and Switzerland. It is but one outcome from an altogether larger exchange project between the Salford Restoration Office and St Gallen based art collective NEXTEX. The aim of the project was to initiate a dialogue between the artists focussed upon what it means to practice as an artist outside of each country's respective (cultural) capital city. In May, twelve Manchester based artists exhibited alongside six Swiss artists in St Gallen's disused Badhaus, a former lodging house for railway labourers. There has also been an exchange programme of artists videos screened in both cities.

The exhibition is split between The Salford Restoration Office and The International 3. As a curatorial project the Salford Restoration Office appears the more considered of the two. Aleksandra Signer exhibits *Record*, a video projection that fills the back wall as you enter. It depicts a young woman, her back to camera, as she flings vinyl LP's into an anonymous cul-de-sac as the snow falls lightly around her. The soundtrack captures the content of each record, digitised and played back in its entirety for the duration of its short trajectory. It is melancholic and haunting.

Haroon Mirza's sonic and sculptural assemblage presents a radio set upon a turntable, the aerial catches against a microphone pinned to an amplifier as it rotates. The work attempts to respond directly to Signer's projection and provide a trance like and hypnotic accompaniment to Signer's visual and aural poetry. Mirza's work could surely stand alone, and in truth Signer's work certainly doesn't need the complement.

Dave Griffiths plays with the beauty and mythic power of film projection. A hybrid Cinematagrophe-Mutoscope requires the viewer to turn the handle and project the 'film'. Each frame contains the black cue dot to signal to the projectionist to change the reel. In the half light, we become the projectionist for a moment, and grasp the seduction of the medium afresh.

Over at the International 3, the presentational strategies appear to be a little more ad hoc; there are video monitors set upon plinths, other upon flight cases, and Andrea Giuseppe Corciulo's un-stretched paintings are presented overlapped and stapled to the wall. Aleksandra Signer exhibits here too, and once more she steals the show. She exhibits an 80 minute video loop on a monitor. A static camera films the view from an interior, a patio door frames an idyllic courtyard garden beyond. Inside, the sound captures a radio's incessant litany of broadcast news detailing the Israeli bombardment of Lebanon in 2006. Outside, a garden bird attempts to gain access to the interior directly through the pane of glass banging its beak against the window repeatedly. It is an exquisitely simple work that captures the way in which we inure ourselves to the world beyond our four walls, cocooned and blithely ignoring the conflicts that continue to ravage around us. It is the bird, and not the radio broadcast, that breaks our idyll and our complacency.

Aurelio Kopainig offers a surreal stop motion animation. A number of curious interventions/happenings take place in an abandoned building. Life emerges from under the floorboards. The film is shot in black and white with a grainy aged patina and there are clear echoes of Hans Richter (a Swiss resident) and his early Dada films from the 20's. It's a delight.

David Sherry's work sparkles with a wit and cheery knowingness. One drawing sends up the culture of Venn diagrams and bureaucratic management, the by-line runs, '*A diagram of social power inherent in everyone, in every action, in every meeting, and in every spoken word. In lampshade form.*'

Elsewhere Andrea Vogel created a performance for the private view. Candice Jacobs' audio loop makes a mantra from a simple 'thank you' and Alexandra Maurer's video *For You* is earnest if a little contrived.

There is little that overtly addresses the nature of working outside the metropolis, save to note that *Between Tracks* provides ample evidence that it is possible to operate outside London (or Zurich) and there is life in the provinces (and cantons). The success of this venture, ultimately, lies less in the curatorial cohesion of this single show, and more in the networks that have been forged between the respective textile cities and their artists.

Brendan Fletcher

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