

BILL AITCHISON & TIM JEEVES

Extension Series 09 // Co-curated by Testing Grounds and Andrés Galeano

Focus: Live Art in UK // Residency: 18-24.04 // Performances: 21.04 19.30 h

Performances documentation: 22-24.04 // Open talk: 24.04, 18h.

Live Art and its development in UK, with Christopher Hewitt and Testing Grounds.

THE SEMIONAUT VERTIGO

VERTIGO: (From the Latin Verto "whirling"): disorientation caused by the feeling of motion when stationary.¹

SEMIONAUT: "The artist today is a kind of semionaut: someone who invents trajectories amongst signs."²

¹ Wikipedia

² Nicolas Bourriaud - *What Is Art (Today)?*

Testing Grounds (UK) and Extension Series (Germany) are working together to commission artists Bill Aitchison and Tim Jeeves to take part in a residency at GRIMMUSEUM, Berlin, to make and present new Live works. Tim Jeeves and Bill Aitchison use disorientation as an artistic strategy, intentionally creating a sense of imbalance, in order to access multi-layered awarenesses of themselves. Both express difficulties in understanding where they are situated, historically, politically and socially. Their work interestingly convey the dizzying sensation of vertigo – the sense of groundlessness, of the world moving beneath our feet even whilst stationary.

Today's art often explores displacement in response to globalisation, migration, multiculturalism, and debates around the validity of cultural or national identities are unavoidable. In their practices, Bill Aitchison and Tim Jeeves take a different approach – from new perspectives. We are reminded of the strategy of the mountaineer who seeking to find the best route up an uncharted mountain, decides instead to turn around and climb another mountain – knowing that from its peak he will then have the best vantage point to begin to work out the route up the first mountain.

Bill Aitchison displaces himself to another country and decides to learn a foreign language (Mandarin) in an attempt to view himself from another culture point. This has led him to focus on his own identity as a Westerner, but trying to understand himself from a Chinese perspective. In yet another displacement, Aitchison will be developing for this event a performance attempting to realign, and re-translate this research for European and German audiences.

»Tonight's performance is the result of at-

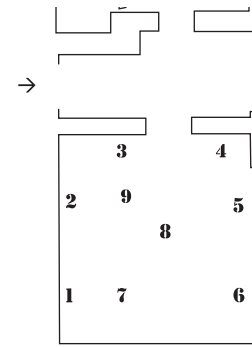
tempting to look at my uneasy relationship to my national identity. Uneasy because I don't particularly like what is usually proposed and uneasy because I don't particularly identify with the whole notion of the nation state. I did this from the perspective of Xiamen in Southern China and the results, it seem to me, are a rather personal document of my time in China. It attempts to convey the sense of being on the outside of something far bigger than me and the many difficulties, pleasures, confusions and insights that this experience can bring without forcing them into a coherent lesson or narrative. I have made the performance this way because one of the very few constants I found was that the moment I thought I understood things, something came along and broke that assumption. Hence, The Customer Is Always Wrong.«

Tim Jeeves is writing for 24 hours on the nature of the transience of time, about the impossibility of planting a firm anchor in the present moment, or in relation to the past or future – as he writes "what we worry about often doesn't come to pass, and what we remember often didn't happen. We are rarely even certain of that which is around us. "Combining esoteric reflections on our relationship with time and conversations with his parents on their view of death – Jeeves will employ himself to explore uncertainties.

Both travel great distances between their work in order to deliberately disorientate and re-orientate themselves. Displacing meaning is, we understood, the focus. Moving the world of ideas and moving geographically, they are concerned with putting different signs and systems into relationship with each other.

Transversal approaches allow to bring together different discourses, but also lead to unexpected questions. As a strong mise en abyme, their work embodies crucial elements of Live Art, a live space for the discovery of new modes of expression and exploration through the cross-over of diverse ideas, cultures and technologies.

Testing Grounds is a Live Art organisation supportive of artistic risks; Artists are commissioned to make and present new work rather than reproducing a set performance.



1

Brown Box

8:15am. Monday morning (Netto)

2

A print of a still life by Cezanne

When I thought I might need it

(Turkish furniture shop)

3

Framed sculpture

The end of the performance (Grimmuseum)

4

Empty tablet box

13th to 19th April (Pharmacy in Liverpool)

5

Pizza box

Sunday evening (Restaurant by the canal)

6

Yellow bag with petals

A sunny afternoon (Flower shop ten minutes from the museum)

7

Cigarette butt

Smoking (Tobacco farm and forest)

8

Apple core

When I was hungry (The kitchen)

9

Take-away waste

Whilst learning the phrase vor mit nehmen (Take-away shop)

Live Art's essential quality lays in its ability to inhabit new territories, and to cut across art forms, mediums and contexts that are not usually explored together. This may open up possibilities of previously unexplored approaches to experiencing and interpreting the world both to the artists and the audience.

We partner with a range of national and international organizations to co-produce and curate events, providing artists with in depth curatorial support and mentoring. Testing Grounds is supported by the Arts Council England, South East.

www.testinggrounds.org.uk

More infos about the artists:

www.billaitchison.co.uk

www.timjeeves.com

Wed.-Sun. 14-19 h.

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