



This chapter takes as its departure point the notion, articulated in a book by Dr Alison J. Carr, artist and curator of the *Temporary Contemporary Market Gallery* exhibition *Showgirl Manifesto* (11-27 October 2018), that '*looking is contingent on the apparatus of viewing*'.¹ This evocative idea resonates with the cultural state of post-structural postmodernity (put forward by 20th century thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan and Judith Butler). Which is to say, put very simply, the theory that everything exists and can be understood only in relation to context, and that all is understood in, with and through its relationship to a person's (viewer's) existing knowledge and experience. But it is also a practical idea. To be able to see, objects must be made visible. To see a showgirl requires that we have access to that world. To see a photograph of a showgirl the image must be conceived, produced, printed, hung on a wall, displayed in a gallery designed for that purpose, and visitors must be invited in to receive it. It is at this point – this temporal and spatial moment of display – that the knowledges and experiences of the visitor become part of the apparatus of viewing.

The exhibition programme within the *Temporary Contemporary* initiative does more than simply exhibit artworks (not that this is ever a simple endeavour). The exhibition programme is part of the wider *Temporary Contemporary* mission, achieved through its partnership with Kirklees Council, to articulate complex relationships, promote creativity and engage communities. These practices are achieved through each artwork, each exhibition, the exhibition programme itself, the Market Gallery's situation within the market, other related events and the existence of all of these parts relating to and negotiating with each other in the ecosystem. The ecosystem and its constituent parts contribute to the apparatus of viewing.

There is also a legacy of relationships to consider as part of this ecosystem (and part of the apparatus). The evolution of *Temporary Contemporary* has, in part, grown out of the legacy of the ROTOR programme. ROTOR was a five-year partnership programme of exhibitions that took place in Huddersfield Art Gallery, led by the University of Huddersfield, Kirklees Council and the gallery and supported by Arts Council England. ROTOR's main concern at the outset was to ask questions about, and provide a platform for exploring the ways in which people might access and engage with the arts. ROTOR aimed to invite viewers to make an engaged and real connection with the works it exhibited by embedding engagement into exhibition content and embracing the challenges of what it means to effectively engage with a viewer.

Through its exhibitions, *Temporary Contemporary* reflects a similar concern for enabling and supporting opportunities for making, showing and, importantly, for encountering arts and culture. This chapter reflects on the relationship between 'looking', 'understanding' and the apparatuses that affect and enable these activities by focussing on six exhibitions in the first year of the Market Gallery programme. Some of these exhibitions represented categories of persons, or memorialised individuals, others made visible the complex role of memory in articulating our own lived experiences. They questioned both representation and audience as part of the apparatus of looking, asking how the politics of looking, memory and memorial play their parts in constructing our understanding of the world.

Representation and the politics of looking

The exhibition *Showgirl Manifesto* (11-27 October 2018) included works by Alison J. Carr, Chloe Nightingale, Isabella Streffen,



[Above] Left: Manifesto Alison J Carr Middle: Ascending A Staircase, Library Theatre, Sheffield, 1934 Alison J Carr Right: Ascending A Staircase, City Varieties, Leeds, 1865 Alison J Carr.



[Left] Right: Working in Heels, 2018, A1 Line drawings with Brusho pigment, Alice Finch.

Alice Finch, Sophie Lisa Beresford, Sharon Kivland, Julie Cook, Lucy Halstead, Laura Gonzalez, Nwando Ebizie and Britten Leigh. These were curated responses to the ideas set out in Alison J. Carr's book entitled *Viewing Pleasure and Being a Showgirl, How do I Look?* In the book, Carr addresses themes of representation and looking through an exploration of the experiences of showgirls, asserting, as in the framing of this chapter that '*looking is contingent on the apparatuses of viewing*', and observing that the digital technologies of contemporary life often act as supplements to '*the liveness of performance encounters*'.² Contextualising these ideas in relation to feminist theory and referencing contemporary and historical works and performances, the book concludes with Carr's 'Showgirl Manifesto'; the main inspiration behind the *Temporary Contemporary* exhibition at the Market Gallery. Raising questions about what it means to look and to be looked at, and about the relationship between women and consumerism, it investigated showgirl activity in its collection of photography and print works through, amongst others, the themes of empowerment and activism, enjoyment and femininity, performativity and authorship, and collectivism and individuality. The exhibition's critical engagement with ideas around looking and their historical provenance within theories of 'the gaze', necessitated an intentional degree of self-awareness in the exhibition's audience, who became simultaneously a participant in these discussions while remaining an observer of the images on show. This critical engagement underpins the complex nature of what it means to be a viewer.

The politics of looking, and critical engagement with looking and representation, was a topic foregrounded in the exhibition *Photography and Lived Experience* (14-21 June 2019), which showcased the work of five postgraduate photographers in the School of Art, Design and Architecture: Alex Beldea, Thomas Duffield, Tim Brown, Sam Welburn and Simon Weldon. The exhibition was preceded by a symposium on the subject of lived experience in the research, practice and reception of photography with a keynote address by Dr Benedict Burbridge (the University of Sussex). 'The gaze' in the exhibition *Photography and Lived Experience* was turned firmly towards photographic processes and outcomes, asking questions such as: how does photography enable us to see beyond the limits of our own experiences (as an apparatus of viewing)? And how is photography materially and constantly changing the reality of lived experience?





Photography and Lived Experience
Alex Beldea, Thomas Duffield, Tim Brown,
Sam Welburn and Simon Weldon.

14 June - 21 June 2019



Beldea's work explored the plight of 32 male refugees from a range of African countries, who spent eight years stranded in Tunisia waiting for international relocation, using photographs, interviews, letters and video. The 32 fled to Tunisia when war broke out in Libya in 2011, a small group within the many tens of thousands that fled the conflict. Their fate lies with the Tunisian government, which continues to refuse to initiate proper asylum procedures. Complementary but historic, Brown's images represented the early stages of an investigation into *colonia vacanze* (children's summer camps) operating during the years of Mussolini's Fascist regime in 1930s-40s Italy and the difficult heritage they represent as both neglected and repurposed architectural sites. These summer camps generated for social betterment were designed to indoctrinate youth into the ideologies of Italian Fascism. Today, many of these architectural structures lie derelict and empty and are a haunt for urban explorers, photographers, graffiti and vandals, whilst others have been repurposed by private property developers for contemporary forms of cultural tourism.

In contrast, Duffield, Welburn and Weldon apply their photographic lens to the UK context in three separate projects. In *Unturned Stones*, Duffield explored the complex and dynamic nature of his own family life, questioning what discourses are produced through the multitude of photographs a family often produces. Welburn examined the passing of the traditional seaside holiday town, capturing the "rhythms" of the seaside industry and specifically the fate and "lost and fading culture" of the Northern English seaside. Weldon's work is a personal journal responding to his father's own collection of photographic material "in a pursuit of answers and resolution" following his father's death. Together, the five artists explored the breadth of photography's potential to examine, document and memorialise lives, to tell intimate stories of people affected by macro political decisions and shifts, but also to speak to how photography practice and photographic objects can interrupt our memories, making it harder to live with particular 'truths'.

Reconstructed memories

Garry Clarkson's *Empire of Memory* (14-21 June 2019) addressed ideas around looking, through image-based manifestations of memory. His exhibition asked questions about how we know – and to some extent construct – our past and present through visual representations. It addressed the possibilities of memory on both a macro and micro scale; presenting contemporary



Empire of Memory
Garry Clarkson

10 - 26 January 2019



photographs alongside archive material, family albums and public records. The exhibition examined different manifestations of collective and individual memory, and the ways in which remembering and forgetting exist in a complex relationship with conflict and with healing. *Empire of Memory* connected with its viewer not only through its subject matter, which presented images that were narratively fragmented and yet somehow familiar and relatable, but also through the ways in which it asked the viewer to consider and question the processes behind the making of images. This purposeful transparency; a breaking of the 'fourth wall' of sorts, aimed to prompt debate about how war and conflict are represented in the media and through personal visual narratives. It had the further effect of inviting audiences to consider the reliability of images, and in particular, the reliability of the photograph as a tool for recording events from the past; that is, the past that is made up of personal memories and feelings.

Dr Liam Devlin's exhibition entitled *Bigfoot in West Belfast* followed the postgraduate research symposium *Photography and Lived Experience*. Devlin's work reflects on his early life growing up with the conflict in Northern Ireland in the 1970s and 1980s. The exhibition foregrounded the significance of personal experiences and collective imagination in how we remember the past, and their relationship to media representations of historical events. Its video montage and wall text intertwined the aesthetics of photojournalism – the documentary evidence of the past upon which we so often base our understanding of past events – with more subjective and imaginative interpretations (magic realism) of a remembered past. In doing so it asked viewers to question what they see, and to critically re-engage with authoritative representations of history and reality. Both Clarkson's and





Bigfoot in West Belfast
Dr Liam Devlin

14 - 21 June 2019



Devlin's approaches to looking resonated closely with *Temporary Contemporary's* concern for questioning the wider role of gallery and exhibition in curating visual representations of events, ideas, stories and memories.

Memorialisation and monuments

Dr Stella Baraklianou's *Nocturne* exhibition (15 April-3 May 2019) addressed representation and audience through its reflections on moments of encounter, and through its intentionally confused temporality which asked audiences to consider when they are looking, as well what they are looking at. Showcasing experimental film and writings which were the outcome of Baraklianou's residency at St Petersburg in June 2018-May 2019, *Nocturne* was a collaborative work with musician Katelyn Clark, whose sound and performance work can be observed throughout the film. Based around the life and work of piano composer John Field (b Dublin 1782-Moscow 1837), the exhibition, with its immersive, floor to ceiling projections, asked questions about instances where diverse practices convene – from music composition to performance, from writing to photography – interrogating meaning at this moment of encounter, and questioning the processes of translation as practices that are transmuted across media. It further addressed the subject of convergence through the ambiguous sense of time it presented, with its projected image of Moscow station in apparent broad daylight, when in fact the images were filmed at the break of dawn during the 'white nights' of Russian summertime; the night-long luminosity which is the result of its high latitude. The figure of the owl in the film – the nocturnal creature awake and disoriented in the light-flooded music room – heightens this sense of temporal uncertainty. In her questioning of the ways in which blurring and slippage occurs at the intersection of practices, Baraklianou used the organism as a metaphor, as can be seen in the exhibition extract below, in which she describes the musical score and painting:

Let's begin with a square; not any square but a small, black, square, just a black rectangle. Appearing inside this perfect square the figures of musical notes, forming eventually a musical score. It is an invisible score, one of unfinished streaks of black on black, with brush strokes so thick it resembles some kind of trembling, living organism breathing in the depths of blackness.

Dr Dale Holmes' exhibition entitled *A Proposal for a Monument for Carl Einstein* (10-26 January 2019) consisted of painting, text fragments and sculptural monuments, and asked viewers to contemplate the uncertainty surrounding the graveside orations by Carl Einstein for Rosa Luxemburg. A further exploration of the role of memory as a mode of seeing and knowing, Holmes' exhibition took 'the memorial' as its central idea, asking viewers to question why it is that certain historical events are recorded and recounted while others are left to slip away, and the significance of this for our relationship with the past, present and future. As part of his exhibition, Holmes collaborated with John Robin Bold, Jorge Boehringer and The Fucks to present what he described as a series of sonic interventions, which included a solo performance, a group Situation and a composed, as he describes it, 'dis-coordinated' ensemble entitled *The Fibrous Body (for Carl, Rosa, and Karl)*. These responses to his exhibition fittingly echoed the values embodied in the research underpinning the show; an in-depth international project culminating in a publication whose innovative approach to history-(re)writing presents a rethinking of the relevance of historical 'facts' for today's reader, drawing attention to the precariousness of memory and giving a voice to those rendered voiceless by the canon. These sonic interventions were exercises in public engagement not merely to attract audiences to the exhibition but rather, in the spirit of *Temporary Contemporary*, they harnessed the power of dialogue – one of the key narratives within Holmes' work – to provide a space for genuine interaction with the artist, the works and the ideas behind them.

Harold Bloom's statements that history as we know it is 'identical with the literary Art of Memory', and that 'Memory is always an art, even when it works involuntarily'³ might be seen to resonate throughout all of these exhibitions. Each of them presented provocations around representation and audience, and intentionally encouraged its viewers to ask questions about what and how we view, represent, and remember our world; our reality. The exhibitions and *Temporary Contemporary* ask us and help us to consider more deeply the event of looking, and the multiple apparatuses that constitute the experiences of looking.

¹ Carr, A., (2018) *Viewing Pleasure and Being A Showgirl, How Do I Look?* London: Routledge p27

³ Bloom, H. (1994) *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*. New York: Harcourt Brace p17

² *ibid*

**A proposal for a monument
for Carl Einstein, to be
sited at the location of his
suicide in Lestelle-
Betharram, Pyrénées,
France.**

This work is proposed as a monument to the memory of the German Jewish Intellectual Carl Einstein. Einstein was one of many prominent figures who were forced into exile by the rise of fascism and the eventual cementing of the Nazi Party's power during the Weimar period into the early 1930s. Einstein was the first and most incisive critic of Cubism and with his close friend Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler brought the work of Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque to prominence. During the Spanish Civil War, he fought against the Fascists as a member of the anarcho-syndicalist Durruti Column. Trapped in southern France on 5 July 1940, rather than be captured by the Nazis, Einstein took his life by jumping from a bridge.

**A proposal for a monument
for Carl Einstein, to be
sited at the location of his
hermitage on Calle
Einstein, Maspalomas,
Gran Canaria, Spain.**

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