

Shuffle

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A change of order or relative positions; a reshuffle.

Shuffle is an exhibition of interdisciplinary research between the nature of illusion and authorship found within the Art forms of Theatre and Painting. Both are concerned with the suspension of belief that takes place; suggesting that what we are seeing is a plausible reproduction of reality. This research brings together these two disciplines to expose their main conceits. In painting, regardless of the level of realism, there is always the acknowledgement that we are looking at a representation likewise with theatre, however real it may seem is always countered by the knowledge that the environment in which we sit suspends the belief in what we are watching. The exhibition looks at how these depictions of realities are created and how the mediums have informed each other, from the set like tableaux paintings of Poussin or the elaborate trickery of perspective seen at the Theatre d' Olimpico in Vicenza. In a modernist manner Gilmour exposes the creation of painting as having a single author and a single viewer a duopoly that had been established over centuries between Gods and Kings or Artists and Kings further entrenched by the single viewpoint of perspective, has always been challenged by the participatory and democratic nature of theatre. There is a strong acknowledgement here that the decentering and democratisation of the artwork did not begin with Installation Artwork, as seen at the first Surrealist Exhibition, but has always existed in the theatre. For it is not the Artist or Theatre production that creates the illusion but the 'Viewers' who are willing to be taken in.

Gilmour explores this notion of authorship by taking the production of the paintings out of the Artists hands and placing it in the hands of untrained participants chosen from a varied spectrum of society; working with young

people from Transition Extreme and Rosemount Drama Group. This calls into question the status of an artist and highlights the nature of art as a series of choices of where the viewer would look. In the way Brecht in his theory of Alienation would distract the audience from their state of belief, the participants are being asked to look at what creates the illusion within the theatre, be it a set of stage lights, a row of seats for the audience to occupy or shadows cast by indecipherable stage equipment. Doorways and fire escape signs that combine to create abstractions and new illusions, by tracing on transparent plastic sheets the participant draws our attention to what they think represents the theatrical experience. There is also the consideration of the hand; that even though the skill has not been realised traces of the participants' character and feeling has been recorded in hurried, slow, soft sensitive or hard lines. Gilmour has responded to this with paintings derived from these images, which sets up a discussion between the trained and untrained hand and how learning is not a hierarchy but is always a conversation and a discussion that all participants engage with and learn from. In this Gilmour challenges her own practice as a painter where she becomes more a facilitator, director or producer of art, no longer developing paintings on her own terms.

This follows a debate in contemporary art around the conditions that artists are working today between the single artist working alone in a studio to the big productions that involve hundreds of people working in the studios of artist such as Damien Hirst, Jeff Koons or Anish Kapoor. Echoing the workshops or production companies of Rubens or Rembrandt.

This work expands on Gilmour's broader research interests in the static nature of Painting and the role movement can play in this medium. Previous work has focused on the importance of time within Painting; celebrating the aging process of decay, rot and rust, enabling the image, colour and tonal structure to change over time. As with Theatre, although the structure remains no two viewing experiences are the same. *Shuffle* continues this exploration through the (de)constructing of the imagery evident in both the changeable and interactive nature of the drawings, a rhythm is introduced through the projected film and the Paintings merely fix compilations of imagery, adding a

stillness to the show.

Matt Morris

List of Participants:

Sam Begg, Calum Chalmers, Jack Dow, Linzi Harrow, Becky Laird, Naomi Leckie, Owen Livingston, Carol McDonald, Alison Muir, Diane Needler, Freda Still, Dorothy Sutherland, Cora Taylor, Dennis Noble, Helen Watson, Ethan West.