

Behind The Eyes; making pictures

24 January – 1 March 2013

Private view: 24 January, 5.30-7.30. Symposium: 25 January 10.30 – 16.30

Artists: Lindsey Adams, Rebecca Fortnum, Beth Harland, Marc Hulson and Johanna Love

The project of this exhibition, accompanying symposium, and publication, is to address something fundamental in the act of picture-making: the transformation of a found or captured *image*, into a *picture*, through material process. Jean-Michel Chevrier, in a recent seminar series on the history and discourse of pictorial composition and the *tableau* (Chevrier, J-M. 2012), explored the complex distinction between image and picture (noting that the English term *picture* is not quite the same as the French *tableau*, but is close to it in many ways). He insists that a picture is not an image; it is something more than an image, it has another dimension. An image can be reproducible; it can be an 'instantaneous composition', a form of seeing that does not involve picture-making nor have the picture's autonomy as an object. Of course, in these terms, a photograph can be either an image or a picture; this is not a debate about medium, but rather about the pictorial, about picture-making and *construction*.

The works in this exhibition are pictures that have a relationship with the photographic and other source images. They are concerned, in various ways, with the possibilities of re-making, or re-seeing recorded images that practices of painting and drawing open up. They engage with something behind, or beyond initial recording, with the distinction between capturing appearance, which might be very immediate, a moment (an image), and something that is constructed, involving another duration entirely (a picture).

The exhibition brings together the work of five artists:

Lindsey Adams, a Derbyshire-based artist, whose recent book of photographs *Fluviatile* was published by RGAP with an accompanying poem by Michelene Wandor. Visual and musical events arising from the book were held at Arnolfini, Bristol, Site Gallery, Sheffield and the South Bank Centre, London, 2011;

Rebecca Fortnum is a Reader in Fine Art at University of the Arts, London. Recent projects include *Absurd Impositions* at the V & A Museum of Childhood, London, 2011, and *Drawing - In and Outside - Writing*, an artists book published by RGAP and exhibition at Voorkamer in Lier, Belgium.

Beth Harland is a London-based artist and Reader in Fine Art at Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton. Recent exhibition and book projects include *A Sort of Night to the Mind*, Canterbury, London, Stuttgart, 2011 and *The Seven Billionth Citizen*, a global collaboration, Townhouse, Cairo, 2012;

Marc Hulson is a London-based artist, Lecturer in Fine Art at Winchester School of Art and a founder member of the London based artists' co-operative Five Years. Recent projects include *Fraternise - The Salon*, Beaconsfield, London, 2011 and *Peeping Tom*, curated by Keith Coventry, Kunsthal KAdE, Amersfoort, The Netherlands;

Johanna Love is Senior Lecturer in Fine Art/Photography at University of Northampton and Associate Lecturer at the universities of Brighton, Anglia Ruskin and University of the Arts London, where she is Acting Head of MA Printmaking. Recent exhibitions include *British Printmaking Japan*, Kyoto Museum,

2012 and *Viewfinder*, Artspace, Seoul, 2011.

Through processes of re-imagining and the materiality of their practices, the artists enter the territory evoked by Jean-Francois Lyotard in his description of Cezanne's endeavour: 'to make seen what makes one see, and not what is visible' (Lyotard, 1991, p.102). They invoke sensation, affect, and the act of looking itself. This sense of seeking something 'other' than the initial image, something that, as the title has it, is *behind the eyes*, suggests a further reference to construction: the process of construction that is *seeing*. As cognitive science can tell us, seeing is 'built' through complex stages of cognitive processing and is a form of dynamic 'composition'. Seeing could be described as a form of unconscious picture-making as, through combining, sorting and interpreting a huge amount of input with reference to both past experience and present context, we literally create what we see.

For some, the process of picture-making needs to involve distance, mediation and a specific, often extensive temporality. In the working approaches shown here, we might sense that a productive space of 'removal' has been achieved through a dialogue between the photographic and painting or drawing, that an altogether different form of process and materiality are central to the act of 'rethinking' the image. Such material reworking affords, as Hal Foster writes in his review of the exhibition *The Painting of Modern Life*, '...a resemblance to the world that is less direct, more mediated by material, touch and tradition. A painting is also worked up over time, and usually taken in over time too...(and) because of its remove and its delay, is able to explore in ways that photography cannot.'(Foster, 2007).

The exhibition, surrounding events and publication, seek to engage with these issues, and by including forms of documentation along with completed works, to explore something of the usually tacit aspects of artistic process in the dialogue between image source and picture-making.

References:

CHEVRIER, J-M. (2012) Central Saint Martin's College of Art, London

FOSTER, H. (2007) At the Hayward, London Review of Books, vol.29, no.21

LYOTARD, J-F. (1991) *The Inhuman*, Polity Press



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