

EPISODE Symposium – Leeds Metropolitan University

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Leeds Metropolitan University

Civic Quarter, Leeds

May 12th 2006

EPISODE Symposium

To accompany the exhibition EPISODE held at Leeds Met Gallery, a symposium was organised to explore the significance of experiences of force and pleasure in lens-based images.

Papers by:

Dr. Sharon Kivland (Artist & Senior Lecturer in Fine Art, Sheffield Hallam University)

Dr. Suhail Malik (Writer & Senior Lecturer in Critical Theory for Fine Art, Goldsmiths College, University of London)

Respondents:

Dr. Amanda Beech (Artist & Senior Lecturer, Course Director, MA in Critical Writing and Curatorial Practice, Chelsea College of Art & Design, UAL)

Dr. Jaspar Joseph Lester (Artist & Senior Lecturer in Fine Art, Sheffield Hallam University)

Chair:

Matthew Poole (Curator & Course Director MA in Gallery Studies & Critical Curating, University of Essex)

Programme:

2.45 Sharon Kivland: A Viennese Waltz

3.10 Discussion with Sharon Kivland, chaired by Jaspar Joseph-Lester

3.20 Suhail Malik: The Primacy of Media

3.45 Discussion with Suhail Malik, chaired by Amanda Beech

3.55 Break

4.25 Plenary Discussion, chaired by Matthew Poole

5.00 Symposium Ends

{tab= Extract from Introduction}

Introduction given by Matthew Poole

The core of the research project, and one of the central themes of the exhibition, has been to explore the significance of experiences of force and pleasure in lens-based images [that is, in this case, photography, video, and lens-assisted painting].

We began with wanting to interrogate the nature of narrative as immanent to lens-based media, [and in particular as immanent to images of urban and rural scenes], to explore how as fragments, and specifically here fragments that are explicitly constructions, these images create a powerful experiential affect upon us that can collapse our categorising of the images as fact or fiction. Rather than present a dialectical model that would aim to help define a distinction between these two qualities of lens based images we have chosen to explore how these kind of images immerse us in what Walter Benjamin might term a state of ambivalence. That is ambi-valence [to be equally torn in two positive directions vigorously. In this case, in the Benjaminian sense, between distraction and criticality]. That is not to imply, by the use of the term 'ambivalence', any disinterest or uncertainty, but instead to explore our experiences of fact and fiction as coterminous, or coextensive – that is that they share the same scope, the same borders.

It is within the latent potentiality of lens-based imagery that we were lead to regard these works as non-representational in the context of this exhibition. They deliver to us the force and pleasure of immersion as a state of experience, rather than proposing any content as symbolic or indexical sign. It is in this way that we as the audience share the state of experience with the art works – the art works are experienced as action through sense perception. Therefore, with this exhibition you have to participate, you are enveloped [literally] by the installation, you are included in its construction.

In this way, our grounding question in the making and now in the reception of this exhibition is placed in understanding artworks through sense perception as experience. Another fundamental question we aim to ask here then is to ask how or where does the criticality of these art works exist in relation to this quality of their affect?

Dr. Sharon Kivland: is an artist, writer and occasional curator. She is Reader in Fine Art in the School of Cultural Studies at Sheffield Hallam University and Research Associate of the Centre for Freudian Analysis and Research, London.

Sharon's Paper was entitled "A Viennese Waltz" – and explored the question of pleasure, linking this experience to ethics,

rhetoric and affect.

Dr. Suhail Malik, is a writer and teaches in the department of Visual Arts at Goldsmiths College, London. He is currently working on a philosophy of American Power.

His paper, "The Primacy of Media", looked at how EPISODE emphasises the lens-generated image as an image. His paper explored how the means of production of the works in the exhibition seem to dominate any referential content of the images, or are at least equal to them.

Jaspar Joseph Lester responded to Sharon Kivland's paper, and Amanda Beech responded to the paper given by Suhail Malik.

We three are extremely grateful to Moira Innes, Leeds Met Gallery Director, and her team at the gallery for hosting the exhibition and the symposium, and to Katy Woods, the Education Officer for the gallery, for helping to coordinate the event.

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