

Teacher/group leader notes

Elizabeth Price: Felt Tip

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané: THE WORD FOR WORLD IS FOREST

16th February – 6th May 2019

This spring Nottingham Contemporary are presenting two parallel exhibitions by artists who have created immersive installations in the galleries. They explore and comment on how changes in economic activity and industry affect environments and human behaviours.

Curriculum Links: Geography, Political, Social & Industrial History, Economics, Materials Science, ICT, Art & Design, Textiles, Photography, Film Studies, Maths, Literacy

Galleries 1 & 2

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané: THE WORD FOR WORLD IS FOREST

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané was born in Barcelona, Spain in 1977, and now lives in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Daniel has brought several ways for us to experience the Brazilian Mata Atlântica rainforest (Atlantic Forest) into the gallery; glass sculptures and plants, a film, a virtual reality headset and through changing the way light enters the space. He is interested in how our senses and emotions are affected when entering the dense rainforest, as well as its loss through destructive human activity.

The Mata Atlântica once stretched up and down the coastline of South America, and covered over 1.2 million square kms of Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina. After centuries of deforestation for timber, sugar cane, coffee, cattle ranching, and the growth of cities, the Mata Atlântica has reduced by over 90%. Today less than 100,000 square kilometers of the forest remains (to compare, England is 130,000 square kms.) Although close to the Amazon rainforest, the Mata Atlântica has always been isolated from its more famous neighbour and is in fact, more ancient. Being cut off from other tropical forests has allowed it to evolve unique ecosystems and habitat for many animal and plant species found no-where else on Earth. Despite conservation projects and protected areas, it is still under threat, and every year a little more of the Mata Atlântica vanishes.



Spiral Forest (Kingdom Of All The Animals And All The Beasts Is My Name), 2014-2015 16 mm film Duration 11:41 min, silent.
Courtesy: the artist and Esther Schipper, Berlin

Daniel explores the supposedly chaotic shapes and forms of natural plants being the opposite of organised geometric shapes and forms. He attempts to counter this view by showing that geometric forms can be organic, and that organic forms can be complex geometric ones.

Daniel has filled Gallery 1 with a new installation **Living Thoughts (2019)**, that creates a simplified view of plant life in the rainforest. Working with glass blower, Jochen Holz, Daniel has created dozens of hand-blown glass branches, creating organic forms that mimic the naturally uneven branches of trees, rather than having the perfection of machine blown glass. The branches have various openings, from which sprout different species of epiphytes (air plants that don't require soil for their nutrients and grow clinging to tree branches in the rainforest), and other plants including orchids, mosses, lichens and bark. The branches are hung at different heights throughout the gallery to create an immersive space.

In Gallery 2 a colour film, **16mm (2008 – 11)**, is showing in the screening space. The film is shot on a 16mm film camera (not digital) suspended on a cable traveling along a perfectly straight line through the chaos of the rainforest.



Daniel used a Structural film-making approach, developed by film artists in the 1960s and 70s, where the way the film is shot, is as important as the subject (using a modified 16mm camera on a specially built cable track and one roll of film.) The camera travelled through the rainforest at the same speed that the roll of film passed through the camera. *For every metre the camera moved, a metre of the roll of film was shot. The film was made in one take.*

A standard roll of 16mm film is 200 feet (60.96m), which when shot continuously produces a film 'take' of 5 minutes, 33 seconds. So 1m of film is consumed every 5.46 seconds, or 18.3cm per second.

16mm is about the process of film-making, as well as giving us an experience of being in the forest. It is a film about time and the creative act.

Phantom (Kingdom of all the animals and all the beasts is my name), 2015 is experienced through a Virtual Reality (VR) head-set, suspended from the ceiling of Gallery 2. The title of the work plays with the idea of an apparition or ghostly vision; this rainforest is one of the fastest disappearing environments of the world.

The area that can be explored within the virtual environment when wearing the VR head-set is indicated by a white circle on the floor of the gallery. Within this circle, the user becomes an inadvertent performer, describing the space they are exploring to others in the gallery by their movements.

'When we slipped the headgear on, we were transported into and completely surrounded by a black-and-white forest whose physical boundaries appeared limitless and through which we could walk, as if in a video game.' Christie Chu, Artnet News



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané Phantom (Kingdom of all the animals and all the beasts is my name), 2014-2015

_C_A_N_O_P_Y_ (2019) explores the idea that geometric forms can be organic and organic forms can be geometric. Abstract shapes have been cut out of the modified ceiling to allow light to penetrate the gallery that mimics light filtering through the forest canopy.

Oculus Rift virtual reality headset, Unity 3D forest scan, motion capture technology, custom ceiling grid Developed by ScanLAB Projects, London Courtesy: the artist and Esther Schipper, Berlin Photos: © Andrea Rossetti

Galleries 3 & 4

Elizabeth Price: Felt Tip

Elizabeth Price was born in Bradford, UK in 1966. She won the Turner Prize in 2012, the exhibition features all-new works: two large video installations and a series of giant pinhole photographs.

Her videos combine archival materials, live-action footage, motion graphics and CGI (Computer Generated Imagery), using carefully matched combinations of image, sound and music. Her quirky narratives explore social histories, class structure and the changing world of work and technology. Elizabeth is also exploring the relationship between primitive and digital forms of visual image making.

'When I make my films, I have millions of files and images that I collect together, and I suppose the task is finding a way in which I can attach these to each other.' Elizabeth Price

Gallery 3

Elizabeth is interested in the history and development of photography, which is referenced in a large physical zigzag structure in the gallery, like the bellows folds used on the front of the first film and photography cameras in the 19th century.



THE GOVERNING BODY, 2019 is a series of pinhole photographs (using a simple camera without a lens), fill the gallery floor-to-ceiling. She selected these images from 1970 – 90s fashion magazines and removing the person from the image, she captures the floating garment without a body with a pinhole camera.

Gallery 4

Two new large-scale video projections, both made in 2018 are being shown in Gallery 4, one after the other. At the entrance to Gallery 4 there is a countdown display letting visitors know how long until the start of the next film. The artist would like visitors to enter at the start of the film, so they see it as a narrative with a beginning, middle and end.

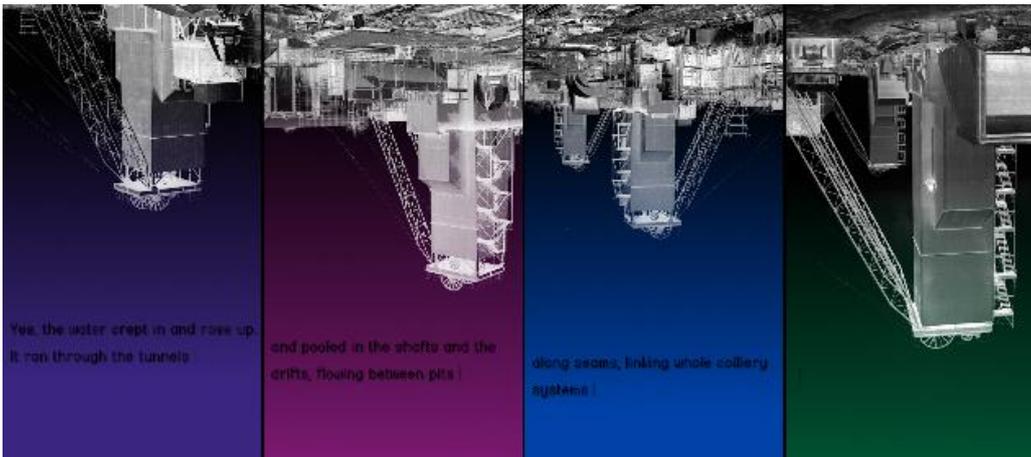
Elizabeth Price, *The Governing Body*, 2019.
Courtesy of the artist

KOHL, 2018 (8 minutes) is four-channel video of a ghost story of the legacy of coal-mining in Yorkshire and Welbeck, Nottinghamshire. The work features the photographs of Albert Walker, courtesy of the National Coal Mining Museum, Wakefield, UK. All these show mine heads during the period of abandonment, between the late 70s and the late 80s.

Four narrators describe surprising appearances and sounds in underground spaces, such as, car parks of newly built urban developments and data centres. The narrators imagine that these ghosts, which are visible as an inky liquid rising through the foundations, have migrated from abandoned and flooded coal mines.

When coal-mines are abandoned groundwater swiftly floods the underground tunnel systems. **KOHL** imagines them unified as a single network by the liquid that now courses through them. Sound travels through the water, and it conveys voice - songs and jokes – as the mines did when they were being worked.

Each narrator ‘speaks’ through a different vertical projection, which represent at various points during the story, flooded mine shafts, carboniferous swamps, ink wells, blackened lungs and digital storage. The narrative is a witty collage of observations and anecdotes gathered by collecting personal stories, archival research and from Elizabeth’s imagination.

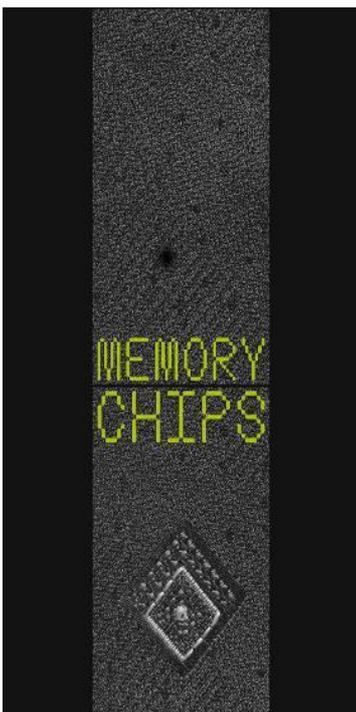


Elizabeth Price, KOHL, 2018. Commissioned by the Walker Art Center, Film and Video Umbrella and Nottingham Contemporary, with support from Arts Council England.

“The miners’ strike took place when I was about 18 and deciding my politics, and I understood it in terms of people losing the dignity of work and the dismantling of communities. Although my family is from the north, I grew up in Luton and didn’t understand that when the mines were closed these areas became not only places without an economic function but also sites of mourning. So, my film features the mineshafts, the head frames, all these photographs taken by Albert Walker which are now gone, but of course all the subterranean architecture remains under the surface.” Elizabeth Price

KOHL draws on a series of connections in which ancient histories of coal, ink, make-up and alcohol meet. The English word alcohol is taken from the Arabic word Kuhl - which denotes a liquid, black, eye make-up. Kohl was originally made using antimony, a poisonous trace metal found and released in coal. Ink was first made using graphite, the ‘highest’, hardest form of coal itself.

FELT TIP, 2018 is a six-metre-high, two-channel projection is a companion work to KOHL. FELT TIP uses the simple necktie as a symbol for social and technological change within the workplace. Used to communicate class distinction for those in clean, office based, ‘white-collar’ employment - a necktie was the workwear accessory for the 20th century professional male.



Elizabeth collected ties from the 1970s and 1980s, a period that saw computers first being used in the workplace.

“I became really interested in that moment, which of course in this country is the same moment as the decline of coal mining.” Elizabeth Price

Many popular tie designs of this period started to look like electronic circuits and digital chips. This was a change from the more traditional tie designs that imitated those of from public schools and elite clubs, giving the message that the world was becoming equal and workers’ talents and skills counted more than their background.

Elizabeth uses these tie designs, (woven using Jacquard punch card technology which inspired the invention of computers), as the starting point for a series of imaginative interlinked anecdotes to tell a story of social change.

Elizabeth Price, FELT TIP, 2018. Commissioned by the Walker Art Center, Film and Video Umbrella and Nottingham Contemporary, with support from Arts Council England.