

JENNET THOMAS

The Advice Shape

OUTPOST

2 November to 21 November

12 noon to 6pm daily

Opening View: Wednesday 1 November, 6 - 9pm

Open to public - admission free

Following the success of her solo show *All Suffering SOON TO END!* earlier this year at Matt's Gallery, OUTPOST are proud to present new work by British artist Jennet Thomas.

The *Advice Shape* is an immersive double screen video installation projected in a darkened chamber Thomas has constructed within the existing gallery walls. An arrow directs the audience into the installation through black and white slit curtains familiar to nightclubs, strip joints and festivals. Inside the chamber the curtains line two ends of the space and are freighted with a sense of anticipation. At each end domestic projector screens face one another. On the farthest an uncanny doubling of the slit curtains sways gently in a breeze, alternating with an androgynous nurse wearing a rubber head. This queer presence has an obscure intelligence about it and gestures at the audience as if undertaking some kind of aptitude test to no apparent ends.

On the facing screen is a hybrid semi-narrative of sensationalist still and moving images, audio, blocks of colour, spoken word, performance and text. Appropriated imagery of natural disasters, mutated animals, abject beauty, American genocide and stuffed effigies coexist with chirrupy 1950s advertising music or romantic classical. The soundtrack manipulates your judgment through a rollercoaster of affective registers.

The audience finds themselves in this charged space between projections that engage in different ways, but do not reveal their meaning easily. A playful dialogue emerges between the videos that at the same time refer to the space in which they are situated. If elements repeat between screens they are only as twisted, ghosted subsets of one another: a black and white slit curtain emerges as a three dimensional display card on a rotating Perspex cake stand that seems to refer to Smartphone barcodes.

A distinguished looking man appears to be trapped behind the screen against fields of colour. He is a mute charismatic television presenter who by turns is charming, educational and confused. Naïve voices tell us extraordinary things about him, how he is the first man to go outside, or to have a baby. Hallucinogenic flash-frames punctuate the colour field with sudden gaps that give us a view of his world's alien futuristic logic.

In this queasy setup implied violence, excess and dumb fear preys on popular cultural anxieties. The sense that something is about to happen lingers, becoming hysterical when the audience is faced with a lo-fi gameshow puzzle that provides no opportunity to engage; behind, the nurse continues its aptitude test. "You have a split emotional register," the audience is told, "would you like me to reseal it?"

Curator Jon Davies has described Thomas's work as 'kitchen-sink surrealism', succinctly articulating the way the artist tips everyday social and domestic concerns into the fantastical, bizarre and transgressive. If kitchen sink realism was tied to concerns in a specific region of England – the North, *The Advice Shape* diagnoses the extent to which domestic fears and anxiety today have become transatlantic and effected by nonhuman factors such as technology. It is simultaneously ubiquitous and particular, riddled with paradox.

The Man: Richard Layzell, Nurse: Paul Tarragó, Voice Over : Jennet Thomas
Music and sounds borrowed from: Mike Sammes & The Mike Sammes Singers,
Desmond Leslie 'Music from the Voids of Outerspace'
Samples from: Saint-Saens, David Bowie, Apple Loops

Suggested viewing time minimum 15 minutes.

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