

OUTPOST Members' Show 2016

Selected by

LYNDA MORRIS & CHRIS RAWCLIFFE

Catherine Österberg | Craig Barber | Ewa Axelrad | Guy Oliver | Hannah Regel | Hedvig Berglind | Ima-Abasi Okon | Jade Montserrat | James Metsoja | Jamie George | Jammie Nicholas | Joe Highton | Kate Murphy | Lee Marshall | Matthew Noel-Tod | Mathew Parkin | Melissa Jordan | Neil McNally | Owain McGilvary & Yan White | Paul Fenner | Sam Williams | Sarah Poots | Scott Mason | Scott Robertson | Seungjo Jeong | Simon Davenport | Siobhan Coen | Sophie Marritt | Terry Bond | Verity Birt

22 June - 31 July 2016

I found it very difficult sitting in judgement on all the submissions. The vast majority were all so good, that very, very few could be rejected easily. It took us the whole first day to get down to around the half-way mark. After another half day we still had over 50 artists we did not want to lose. We put them into groups: Film and Video, 2D, 3D and Performance.

By this time we were worried about the size of OUTPOST's space, knowing that we would coincide with the British Art Show and related activities. We proposed to keep the far wall blank for screenings every couple of hours and for performances. This would mean dimming the lights and losing daylight. "Perhaps we could have a sofa in the space?" "That would compete with 3D work." "Can we have some big works?"

I talked about an exhibition called *The Mirror and the Square*, held in the 1950s at the height of the Cold War, where the artists were divided between figurative and abstract, meaning Left and Right politically. John Berger had been one of the selectors. We had the idea for one wall of figurative work, including photography, and one wall of abstract work and *materiality*. There were posters and work using words we planned to group on the back wall.

As we began the final cull to try and reach 30 artists we started to think again about the sofa... But questions remained: Should we have more performance? What about all the good artists who had not made it through to the *final selection*? Did we have enough women artists? Were there too many artists from London?

Most of all we wished the audiences could have experienced the two days we spent just looking at all the work. It was great. It reminded Chris and I that we are both failed artists turned curators.

Selecting the 2016 Members' Show for OUTPOST is a great gig and doing so by invitation from Lynda Morris is a privilege. Lynda has accomplished a lot to date throughout her career, not least in Norwich where she established *EASTinternational* and ran a celebrated programme at the Norwich Gallery. I still feel like I'm a newbie, working my way through trial and error. It's a personal accomplishment and I'm proud to be back in Norwich, almost 10 years after I left the OUTPOST Steering Committee.

To plan an exhibition from an open submission is no easy task. What are the works going to look like? How do you curate it? Will I agree with Lynda? Will I dare disagree with Lynda?! How to make sense of it all when you have to look at hundreds of works? Previous Members' Shows come to mind and the pressure is on.

It turns out selecting wasn't difficult; following a model well tested during the EAST days Lynda and I picked our favourite works. The challenge was to reduce the size of the show, to 'deselect' great pieces of work. Despite this we found ways to bring in as many artists as possible: performances and screening against the back wall, wall-based gallery works, some sculpture, and the odd artist intervention.

It's been great to work with OUTPOST again. So much energy comes out of the Steering Committee and it's good to see first-hand how much beautiful and intriguing art is being made out there by the members at large. And, as Lynda says, the next best thing to being an artist is to hang out with them.

OUTPOST

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