

Pairs: Amy Dickson / Jamie Jenkinson

The Depot - 38 Upper Clapton Rd, London, E5 8BQ 10 July, 7:30pm, £5/3

Amy Dickson and Jamie Jenkinson have both made substantial series of video works with mobile phones, usually with single takes that suggest an intuitive and spontaneous approach to shooting - a mode which they consider intrinsic to their medium. They resist reshooting and post-production. Hence their work foregrounds and promotes the act of looking, embracing a certain amount of wandering and the potential for 'errors'. At the same time, the eye that they each bring to their work involves ways of composing a moving image that is practised and honed. In addition, they also often set out to explore strategies that exercise resolution, exposure, focus or the misuse of 'apps' and automatic camera settings. The world that they find close to hand - whether gardens, farmyards, local parks, bedrooms or city streets - is where they go looking. The programme includes two new video-performance pieces and a single-screen video that they will have made together on the day.

Part 1

 (10/07/17), JJ, iPhone 7 plus, 2'
Bulls (21/06/17) JJ, iPhone 7 plus, 3'
Cockadoodledoo (24/06/17) JJ, iPhone 7 plus, 8'
Mum's Garden (2017) AD, Sony Xperia Z5, 2'
Wind I Screen (2016) AD, Sony Xperia Z5 3'
Wind Vane (1972) Chris Welsby, 16mm 8'
N, S, E, W II (2017) AD, video-performance, 5'

Part 2

Three Kitchen Pans (10/07/17), JJ, performance, 4'
Nearer Further (1985) Józef Robakowski, video, 4'
Balcony 3 (09/07/17) JJ, iPhone 7 plus, 2'
BZZZ, (26/05/17) JJ, iPhone 7 plus, 5'
Winter Walk (2016) AD, Sony Xperia Z5, 3'
Reeds II (2016) AD, Sony Xperia Z5, 6'
 (2017), AD, Sony Xperia Z5, 3'

Amy Dickson / Jamie Jenkinson in Conversation

11:25:04: Jamie: So where do we go?

12:39:25: Amy Dickson: The 

12:46:51: Amy Dickson: Always inspired when I go somewhere out of my usual vicinity and have an idea for a video on the shoreline.

12:48:08: Jamie: Any water would be fun. I find it quite difficult the work with, it's really unpredictable, which could be something to work with

12:52:32: Amy Dickson: ...mmm yeh, as is the weather as you said earlier today.

12:52:47: Amy Dickson: How's your residency going?

12:52:54: Amy Dickson: Where are you?

12:55:35: Jamie: Yeh, I need some rain!

12:56:49: Jamie: It's at the Sidney Nolan Trust, just on the boarder with Wales. It's going good, lots of nature and animals!

12:57:53: Jamie: Like you say, new places are really inspiring, even when they're things I see quite regularly

13:00:58: Amy Dickson: Sounds idyllic! I usually pray for sunshine, feel very uninspired with out it. Though there's something interesting about how a grey sky flattens everything.

13:01:38: Amy Dickson: Will look forward to the new videos then!

13:30:12: Jamie: Remember hearing about the Becher's waiting days for perfectly grey sky for their typologies.

13:32:23: Jamie: They have black bulls here that Nolan bred for their stark silhouette, that's become a video for the screening.

13:34:56: Jamie: I really enjoyed Red and White, is that going to be in the programme?

14:25:13: Amy Dickson: Nice! I want to make some work about horses, there one of my favourite things but I've never made a video..well I made one in the new forest but it never made it onto Vimeo. Think I'm too scared of my own work half the time.

14:39:11: Amy Dickson: Thanks - I wasn't planning to put Red & White in but haven't made the final call yet. There's maybe something in the movement and the division of the screen using Face in the Picture app. You've been making some videos recently that have natural divisions or architectural shapes that divide the screen in some way. I like that there just there in the frame, they don't feel rigid or meticulously composed but you're aware that it's considered and as a viewer you are conscious of this and their effect on the space.

14:50:21: Amy Dickson: Just looked up Sidney Nolan, I didn't really know about him I ashamed to say. Great your doing a residency there this year - his centenary! Can see some connections between your works 'Roses in Merric Boyd Vase' for instance - a vase of roses on a background of horizontal lines!

23:20:23: Jamie: That's a good one!

23:23:18: Jamie: You're right, I hadn't thought of those compositions as dividing the screen before. Just made a video of one of Nolan's barns, with some interesting lines and corrugated iron. Not sure what's going to happen to it yet..!

23:27:57: Jamie: Animals are quite an interesting subject, would really like to see your horse video. Something about the choices made onscreen, from the algorithms to the human intention, but the natural events unfolding uncontrollably. Really enjoy that dynamic in your videos, like Hannah's Room was a real source of inspiration to that way of thinking.

11:00:53: Amy Dickson: Yeah, that's a really interesting train of thought. I like the tension it creates - sometimes going with those algorithms and sometimes fighting against them such as paying with the edge of binocular functions such as autofocus or purposely shooting in low and changing light conditions. I'm not sure I was completely conscious of that when I made Hannah's room, it was more intuitive. I think it's important to me not be overly conscious of what I'm doing, as it can remove the naturalness. Going back to Horses - Horse riding is one of the most dangerous sports you can do because of the unpredictability of working with a live animal. I guess this links to what you were saying at the beginning about water. It's that element of tension and to some extent unpredictability in live performance that I'm drawn to - I'm looking forwards to your live performance of 3 Kitchen Pans in the screening!

11:32:49: Jamie: Totally agree, shooting a video needs to be both spontaneous and intuitive. I find going back to reshoot a video is near impossible, as I start trying to elaborate on the nuances of the original that didn't quite work, which begins to feel contrived. We've talked a lot about honesty in both our practices, such as this liveness, and the lack of postproduction after the recording finishes, and even I our somewhat extensive discussion about how to have this discussion! What is it about this method of honesty that you enjoy, as it is arguably a very limiting approach in terms of the filmic possibilities of video postproduction?

12:54:46: Amy Dickson: Ha, well I think we found the right method - this conversation feels very live and unpredictable!

29/06/2017, 13:01:25: Amy Dickson: I think it helps to have some limitations to work with, fantastic things can be created in post production but it's a very different way of working. For me it's essentially about looking and re-looking at what's already there, each moment is different, like a first hand drawing, you will never achieve the same line, feel, the flow you had, the authenticity - there's no second takes! Reworking in post would counter the directness and instantaneity that I look to achieve. The practice itself feels live as it's constantly evolving with the technology so in that sense it feels very open-ended.

14:05:21: Amy Dickson: It can be quite brutal - not only revealing floors and limits of the technology but also human error - something you've spoken about quite a bit. On the subject of re-looking as well as being inspired by new places you've made lots of works that re-visit the same subject.. windowsills, toilet rolls, ladybirds. Is that in a way reshooting or constructing a relationship between the version's? I wonder how they would work in a screening back to back like John Smith's Hotel Diaries.

14:06:33: Amy Dickson: *like I once saw John Smith's Hotel Diaries

13:41:15: Jamie: I see a lot of parallels between video and drawing, like you say. It's like when someone scans a drawing and reworks it, there are lots of things that can be done, but it becomes something else. The directness is crucial.

13:49:32: Jamie: Not sure if toilet rolls are my subject! But the wrapper has become interesting while using the facilities...! I did show some of the plant on windowsill series together, but not sure how well they worked, I like the idea of collecting videos over a set period and/or place, like the Tuscany video I did recently, which is chronological and unaltered video clips in sequence, becoming somewhat structural. I guess something in this is how we negotiate structure in video, as we still work with structures, from the relationship between your split screen and a window frame, to repetitive camera movements, yet the structures seem quite fluid, somehow more videoy and less 'filmic'. Why don't you work on film?

12:58:01: Amy Dickson: Ha, yeh - but I like that sense of humour in your work and how you utilise everyday subjects to explore the complex components of video such as image processing, and with a sense of play. Also the aesthetics of video in relation to and within the context of the mobile phone as populist consumer technology - there was some reference to that in Tuscany. I enjoyed your transversing of space in that video too - similar to a match / jump cut and the thread of light - something always referred to as evocative of the region. I think there's an overall sense of chronology to your work - each video feels like an 'encounter' on a progressive timeline.

13:17:48: Amy Dickson: I have used film, I started out making Super 8 films having been handed down a Super 8 camera, I still do sometimes. But my mobile phone was more accessible, I liked the immediacy, it fitted in my pocket (not so much now!) and was always with me, it was unobtrusive and at the time not looked upon as a 'camera'. As the mobile phone's identity has changed and impacted on culture I feel my videos have with it and become part of an evolving context in its own right. Structurally - yeh I don't think in terms of frames, as Jennifer Nightingale referred to in a previous 'Pairs' conversation, I guess I likewise feel an internal sense of structure and time, and as you say video very much facilitates this being inherently fluid.

14:20:03: Jamie: Think that's a nice cutoff point. To the 🐉!