



**Thurs 7th - Sun 24th
April 2016**

**A.P.T. Gallery
Harold Wharf
6 Creekside
Deptford
London SE8 4SA**

Open: Thurs to Sun 12 - 5pm

Plastic Propaganda

presents ...

<Both Ends of Madness>

An exhibition on the effects of wellbeing on contemporary visual arts practice: curated by Angus Pryor

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Foreword

Art can have a profound legacy. To see an exhibition that explores the issues of wellbeing is a delight, but also perhaps a creative provocation. We are continually surrounded by issues of wellbeing which are given focus and exposure by a global mass media.

This exhibition considers the effect that wellbeing has on the individual and how a range of practitioners have channelled psychological states, experiences and addictions into various forms of creative visual practice. Taking the example of bereavement and loss, the experiences and issues which underpin this exhibition, although in some sense personalized through specific works, are universal.

I have known William Minto for over thirty years both before and since he found his vocation as an artist. Curated by Angus Pryor, a respected arts professional and painter, I hope that this exhibition is just the start of a meaningful dialogue around wellbeing and creative practice. Hence it gives me great pleasure to be able to support *Both Ends of Madness* and its interdisciplinary symposium.

Paul Jackson

March 2016

Plastic Propaganda Presents:

Both Ends of Madness

Introduction

Throughout the History of Art, madness and an associated range of pathologies, creative and otherwise, have informed and often accompanied the visualisation and execution of artistic practice. Since antiquity, thinkers have associated creativity with psychopathology—the classic idea of the “mad genius.” Although since inflected by stereotypes drawn from mass culture and a more esoteric fine art tradition, examples abound. These might include the manic pursuit and creation of the perfect artefact or object, to the recognition of creative practice per se as a displacement from trauma, addiction and illness or indeed as a therapeutic and reflexive response to such.

Artists realise their work in a range of contexts beyond the sanctioned spaces of art colleges and private studios with the category of “outsider artist” coined in recognition of the manifold experiential contexts of cultural production. For example, individuals suffering from diagnosed mental health issues may attend day hospitals, in-patient units and other institutions. Generally these provide a safe environment which might encourage various types of self-expression through painting, drawing, writing or other forms of therapeutic discursiveness.

The process of making art in such an environment may enable the “patient” to connect with their emotional, psychological, social (life experience) and, for some, their spiritual self. In other contexts, artistic practice can help with breakdown or burnout. At the outset, the act of making is one of catharsis but the individual may not appreciate it at the time. Suffering from a severe mental burnout, the individual can be broken, made devoid of cognitive skills. Time, therapy and education may help to rebuild the mind and spirit leading to greater happiness and an enhanced sense of purpose.

As Dean Keith Simonton has noted (Cultural Psychiatry, Addiction, Alcohol Abuse, Attention Deficit Disorders, Schizophrenia, 2005), according to historiometric, psychiatric and psychometric research, exceptional creativity is often linked with identifiable symptoms of psychopathology, a linkage which has some degree of genetic foundation. However, this relationship is not equivalent to the claim that creative individuals necessarily suffer from or evidence some form of psychopathology. But a theoretical interpretation is offered in terms of the cluster of cognitive abilities and dispositional traits required for creative behaviour and the impact of genetic and environmental factors in the emergence of this cluster.

Both Ends of Madness attempts to explore the links between the creative process and forms of psychopathology by considering how a range of contemporary practitioners have chosen to visualise their creative and conceptual processes in the act of making and fashioning art.

This exhibition and its associated, interdisciplinary symposium, have been organised in partnership with the Art in Perpetuity Trust (APT) Gallery, Deptford, the representatives of which we would like to thank for their support, consideration and engagement with this creative venture.

Angus Pryor
Reader in Fine Art
University of Gloucestershire
March 2016

Plastic Propaganda

A not for profit collective, Plastic Propaganda (PP) was formed in 2009 by William Henry, a UK-based installation artist and sculptor and by Angus Pryor, a practicing painter. Grant Pooke, an art historian based at the University of Kent, is a consultant to the collective. Plastic Propaganda was established in order to provide a supportive and visible platform for both new and established artists, irrespective of medium. A strongly collaborative and inclusive ethos has underpinned Plastic Propaganda from its inception. In turn, this has informed a range of national and international partnerships with galleries, curators and educators.

Since 2009 the collective has organised and supported exhibitions both nationally and internationally, including the use of innovative venues and spaces both in London's Canary Wharf and Tower Bridge in addition to Covent Garden and the Baltic Exchange. Overseas exhibitions have been based in New Delhi, Taiwan and most recently Amsterdam. In 2015 Angus Pryor of PP was involved in a major collaboration with Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, now the Wilson, which involved the exhibition of British Biblical Art, including commissioned paintings, alongside modernist work from the Ahmanson collection.

The exhibition concept Both Ends of Madness was conceived from an original idea by Angus Pryor, and has been made possible by the considerable efforts of William Minto (coordinator), John Butterworth (conduit with APT) and Lucy Gresley (Essay, Press, PR, social media). The catalogue has been arranged and designed by Jez Giddings and Ben Hart, with Grant Pooke providing final proofing.

Drawing - thinking made visible

Making marks

Drawing is a primal means of symbolic communication that 'predates and embraces writing and functions as a tool of conceptualization parallel with language'.(1) However drawing is never a transcription of thought (like writing) but rather an elaboration of the thought itself, at the moment it becomes image. (2) It is for this reason that the artist may sometimes be surprised and recognize her or his thoughts only in the moment of making. Avis Newman proposes that the act of drawing is inscriptive (emphasizing marking rather than recording). In this inscription, she says, there exists 'the shadow of our ambivalent relation to making marks, before the time when image and text are differentiated'. (3) Perhaps Eva Hesse's drawing *Untitled* (see figure 1.) embodies these ideas. It does not directly reference nor is it entirely unfamiliar; its likeness stays just out of reach. Newman states that when one looks at a drawing, there is a consciousness of the 'ghost' of the text in the image and that the inscriptive nature of the activity holds the two in suspension (no matter what is being drawn). (4) Newman describes how thoughts can 'float between reading and perceiving' and Hesse's collection of early drawings come to mind here.(5)

Interestingly, Newman and De Zegher (2003) explore the notion of drawing as inscriptive in psychoanalytical terms. Art and psychoanalysis are connected in their shared relationship to the unconscious mind and thus psychoanalytic theory provides a deep vein of information for the understanding of art. (6) For example, theories of early child development have been used as a way of understanding the meaning of mark making, drawing parallels with the bodily sensations of infants prior to the sense of a unified self. (7) Newman and De Zegher describe the infant's sensations (such as being touched, fed or moved) as having a whole language of communication in them and they infer that gesture (as an inscriptive act) originates from these primitive memories of the infantile body in pieces. (8) Thus the desire to mark and inscribe is associated with these earliest memories and the eventual connection of the originally scattered sensory centres of the self.



figure 1: Eva Hesse, *Untitled*, 1960-61, Ink on paper

Newman and De Zegher elucidate further by likening the gesture of the hand whilst drawing with the primal gesture of the infant reaching out to the (departing) mother. They suggest that drawing is simultaneously 'a casting out and retrieving, acted out in the tracing of this separation'. (9) They also refer to the theories of the psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion, surmising that in drawing 'we not only see ... the physical record of thought and its intentionality ... we also intuitively recognize in marks, certain actions that constitute residual traces of primitive bodily movements'. (10) Again, Hesse's drawing resonates here, particularly since the washes of ink and bold circles directly embody the gesture of the artist. De Zegher asks whether drawing is really this 'in-between space where everything happens at once: separating and binding, sensation and thought, response and coming-in-to-being each time over and over again?'. (11)

What drives creativity?

Psychoanalytic theory has also been used as a way of understanding why artists are driven to create. For example, Walsh (2013) explores the influential theories of the psychoanalyst Melanie Klein (1882-1960) and how these may relate to artistic creativity. Klein explored early child development and elucidated the psychic aggression of the infant as s/he struggles with early conflicts between good and bad (such as the available 'good' breast and the unavailable 'bad' breast). (12) She proposed that, in order to cope with negative feelings, the infant splits objects (mentally) and projects the bad part onto another: the imagined body of the mother. Klein suggests that as the infant grows and develops, s/he begins to see the mother as a whole person with good and bad features and experiences guilt at his/her own destructive impulses. It is here that a desire to repair the damage emerges – an anxiety to make the object whole – and this is proposed as driving the creative desire both to repair and to repeat.

Interestingly, Eva Hesse's artwork has been the subject of extensive psychoanalytic theorizing. (13) This is perhaps because of her history as a Jewish refugee from the Holocaust and also the suicide of her mother when she was a child. Fer (1994), for example, draws on Kleinian psychoanalysis to read affect into Hesse's sculptures, which she argues reveal an 'economy of loss' in the very procedures she uses to make them. (14)

Walsh warns however against reducing works of art to a knowledge of an artist's traumas, reminding us that (like dreams) images are signifiers of ideas rather than direct transcriptions of them. (15) Works of art are a social production addressed to viewers who encounter them through the lens of their own traumas and desires. Walsh suggests that the greatest power of art may be understood as 'the achievement of a state of unity which ultimately overcomes the trauma of loss'. (16) However, she frames the motivation of loss positively, describing it as a desiring mode for creativity. Art allows us to wreak havoc on bodies and materials but at a (safe) distance and without being stuck in a dynamic of primary, masochistic destruction. (17) Walsh refers to both Eva Hesse and Louise Bourgeois as artists who formalized traumatic experiences to produce novelty from within the chaos of aggression.

It is also important to consider that psychoanalytic theory continues to develop and that the unconscious mind is increasingly viewed as a force field of energy rather than 'a hydraulic machine that structures relations between subjects and objects according to the dynamic of repression and desire'. (18) Walsh suggests that this century may bring a changed criticality in psychoanalytic theory, defined by 'inclusion, connectivity, attaching and constituting attitudes'. (19) For example, she draws attention to the work of artist and psychoanalyst Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger (b. 1948), who has developed a Matrixial theory of subjectivity (as an alternative to traditionally male gendered psychoanalytic theory). Ettinger uses the notion of the maternal womb as a metaphor to focus on togetherness and inter-relatedness, emphasizing connectivity before the development of gender hierarchies. Ettinger's Matrixial theory is a way of placing a female symbol within the debate – to include rather than exclude difference. (20) It is interesting to note that Ettinger (2006) has also explored the work of Eva Hesse through the lens of Matrixial theory, interpreting her themes of breasts, cords, holes and repetition itself as her attempt to create space – space where the interrelationship between the self and the mother can be understood. (21)

Understanding intention

Of course, another important way of understanding artworks is to consider what the artists meant to convey when they created them. Hesse was associated with the Minimalist movement in America and most of her work was produced between the early 1960s and her early death from cancer in 1970. In an interview in 1970, Hesse talked about the importance of her early drawings (such as *Untitled*, shown in figure 1.), describing how directly they related to her later sculpture. Interestingly, she expressed her desire to ‘create nothings’, reflecting the sense of absence in her work that has already been described. She did this not only by making empty spaces or ‘windows’ as she called them, but also by creating things that weren’t actually things (in the sense of nameable, representative objects). (22) Indeed, Hesse resisted interpretation of her work, stating:

‘Don’t ask what it means or what it refers to. Don’t ask what the work is. Rather, see what the work does.’ (23)

It is known that Hesse kept a diary from her teenage years onwards, in which she reflected on her thoughts and feelings. (24) She also kept numerous notebooks and sketchbooks that were full of drawings, annotations and notes to herself. Hesse seems to have worried away at ideas in her books but ultimately, and quite intentionally I think, she left her drawings to speak for themselves.

This essay is an adapted extract from a BA Fine Art (Painting and Drawing) Dissertation submitted to the University of Gloucestershire in 2014. It was titled ‘Drawing – thinking made visible? An enquiry into the relationship between thinking and drawing with particular reference to the work of Eva Hesse, Antony Gormley and Rachel Whiteread’.

Dr. Lucy Gresley is an artist, researcher and clinical psychologist. (lucygresley.com)

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- (2) Fisher, J. (2003) ‘On Drawing’ in De Zegher, C. (ed) *The Stage of Drawing: Gesture and Act, selected from the Tate Collection*, Tate Publishing, London, (p. 222).
- (3) Newman, A. and De Zegher, C. (2003) ‘Conversation b/w Avis Newman/ Catherine de Zegher’ in De Zegher, C. (ed) *The Stage of Drawing: Gesture and Act, selected from the Tate Collection*, Tate Publishing, London, (p. 73).
- (4) Newman, A. and De Zegher, C. (2003) (p. 73).
- (5) Newman, A. and De Zegher, C. (2003) (p. 73); For examples see: Sussman, E. (2006) ‘Works on Paper/ Works in the Papers’ in De Zegher, C. (ed.) (2006) *Eva Hesse Drawing*, The Drawing Centre, New York, (pp. 153-79).
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- (14) Fer, B. (1994) ‘Bordering on Blank: Eva Hesse and Minimalism,’ *Art History*, vol 17 (3), September, (p. 110).
- (15) Walsh, M. (2013) (p. 114). (16) Walsh, M. (2013) (p. 114). (17) Walsh, M. (2013) (p. 133). (18) Walsh, M. (2013) (p. 133).
- (19) Walsh, M. (2013) (p. 133).
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- (21) Ettinger, B. Lichtenberg (2006) ‘Gaze-and-Touching the Not Enough Mother’ in De Zegher, C. Ed. (2006) *Eva Hesse Drawing*, The Drawing Centre, New York, (pp. 182-213).
- (22) Leader, D. (2002) ‘Eva Hesse: Minimalism With a Human Face’, *Tate Arts and Culture Magazine*, Issue 2, Nov/Dec 2002. Accessed 14 March 2016, <http://www.tate.org.uk/magazine/issue2/hesse.htm>.
- (23) Leader, D. (2002).
- (24) Sussman, E. (2006) (p. 154).

List of Participating Artists

The members of Plastic Propaganda who are contributing to *Both Ends of Madness* are listed in the pages which follow together with examples of their practice. The submissions exhibited cover a range of media, including audiovisual work, painting, printmaking and sculpture. The CVs of participating artists can be viewed on our website: www.plasticpropaganda.co.uk

John Brennan

Richard Brooks

John Butterworth

Anjula Crocker

Mandakini Devi

Dom Elsner

Jez Giddings

Lucy Gresley

William Henry

Mark Howland

Emma Moody-Smith

Angus Pryor

Mike Walker

Heidi Yssennagger

John Brennan

Emotional and contextual conflict is the underlying focus of most of my painting. As an artist I'm fascinated by a subtle sensation that I've come to recognise and regard as a visual paranoia of sorts. It can manifest itself in a wide range of subject matter, the common denominator being a sense of the uncanny or enigmatic. It could be a landscape that feels both uplifting and menacing at the same time, a micro facial expression that reveals an underlying darkness, or a posture that implies both invitation and rejection. I find these tensions compelling.

The fiction and popular culture of my childhood and early teenage years continue to shape my interests to the present day. Whilst the result is a seemingly disparate range of subjects, in my own psyche these subjects are all connected and inhabit a single interior world.



John Brennan, The Trouble with You (2015), oil on canvas, 60 x 60 x 4 cm



John Brennan, Ich Lebte und Starb (I Lived and Died) (2013), oil on canvas, 120 x 70 x 4 cm

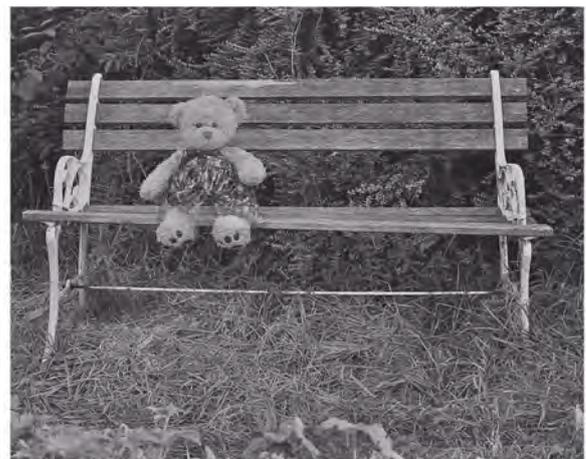
Richard Brooks

The work of Richard Brooks is concerned with raising questions about the human condition. His aesthetic avoids portraying readily identifiable people or places both to prevent stigmatisation, but also to support a broader engagement with his practice. Richard's three submissions address personal loss and bereavement, raising questions about the nature of abuse and the pain arising from the loss of memory.

In his *Remembrance diptych* (2009), the established trope of an empty bench as a signifier of loneliness and loss is reinterpreted by the subtle use of double exposed film which references the impact of loss and the effects of immediate pain.

The large format, hand-printed monochromatic photograph, *Damaged Portrait – Bella* (2009) is a haunting image of a fragile doll. The black and white medium was selected both to evoke feelings of loss, but also to resonate with the idealised memory of a child lost to people trafficking.

The silent video, *On Borrowed Time*, graphically portrays the effect of memory loss; although all the elements of the information remain, it has now become inaccessible due to the breaking of the physical links that had previously rendered it intelligible.



Richard Brooks, Remembrance (2009), two framed digital photographic prints 127 x 101 cm



Richard Brooks, Damaged Portrait – Bella (2009), hand printed silver gelatine photograph (framed) 116cm x 106cm

John Butterworth

What is the meaning of this feeling?
It might be well-meaning but what is it revealing?
What is your view
Of the stew
That we tend to eschew?

Sometimes it's old sometimes it's new
Sometimes it's borrowed sometimes it's blue
But never let them ridicule you;
Accept your own world view

No need to worry, everything will be Alright
Just be prepared when you have a fright
it might come in the middle of the night
But it might just feel right
It might assuage the feeling
that what you are dealing with
comes down to the simple fact:
you feel and you deal with that

So don't give into the distractors
Follow your course
It may lead you astray
But it may also keep the Madness at Bay
Whatever you say is the right way
After all, who else is there to say otherwise
Just stay present as best you can and trust in
your instinct
It may well just carry you through from one
End to the other (and in everything else you
do!)



John Butterworth, Falling Man (2008), oil on canvas, 120cm x 120 cm



John Butterworth, At the Wake (2009), oil on canvas, 82 cm x 55cm

Anjula Crocker

Anjula is a middle-aged recovering alcoholic. Her experience of addiction is central to her work. Through the process of conceiving and making her work, Anjula has found a pathway through which to channel her obsessive impulses. The creative process has alleviated her experience of being seduced by the allure of alcohol and obsessive compulsion, which promoted repetitive behaviour.

Anjula's work has been predominantly in oil paint and print, but she has also started to use embroidery and fabric as mediums. The association of fabric with memories has a valuable role in Anjula's creative language; she strives to link the past with the present in an attempt to express completion and acceptance, enabling her to move forward with her recovery and her work.

The seduction of found fabrics combined with the rhythmic, repetitive movement of hand stitching has replaced her addiction to alcohol. Anjula now also embroiders finely detailed panels and makes intricate pieces of soft sculpture. She uses wire to provide a framework for each piece, adding structure and textual interest.

Flowers have been a source of inspiration, expression and symbolism for centuries and have a place in most cultures and contemporary societies. Anjula uses their symbolism to seduce, and the decorative nature of the humble flower is mirrored in the superficial beauty of the work, which masks a deeper layer of meaning. The recurrent themes of seduction and repetition through the use of the decorative and the ornate are played out in her repeating patterns.

Study in the Fine Art arena has been a powerful force in Anjula's journey through recovery, and it is now a stabilising factor in her life. Anjula feels that her obsessive, addictive persona is part of who she is and not a choice, but she chooses to assuage her obsessions by creating with whatever medium engages her at the time. The creative process is now her addiction, and art is her drug of choice. *Twelve Steps and Counting* is a narrative of Anjula's progress through the twelve step programme of Alcoholics Anonymous. It contains images of the 12 paintings she created as her visual response to each of the steps. As such it is her personal reflection on the recovery programme and her journey through it. Anjula self published the book as part of her Fine Art MA at Norwich University of Art. *Twelve Steps and Counting* (A4 Booklet)



Anjula Crocker, Domestic Bliss (2014), stretched canvas, 84.1 cm x 59.4 cm



Anjula Crocker, Twelve Steps and Counting embroidered textile, (2013). 140 X 200cm

Mandakini Devi

My ideal space is to lie in a beautiful bed of flowers turning my head away from the cornucopia of noise and the avaricious aspects of the art world.

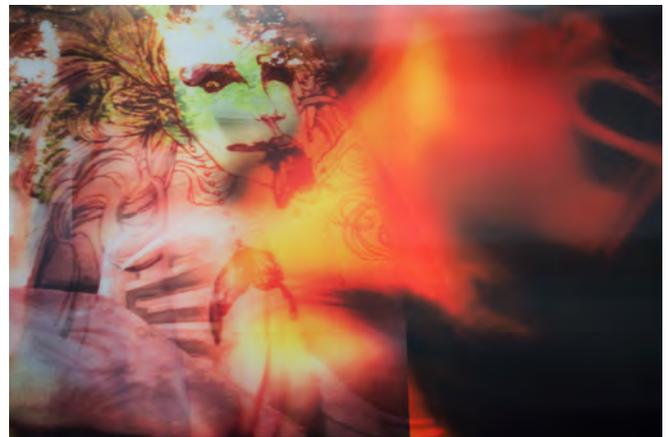
The self is a recurring leitmotif in my practice. During my undergraduate studies as a painter, I shifted from painting with a brush, to drawing with light although self-portraiture continues to be the central focus of my work.

The two lenticular prints express my personal engagement with the self and the body. Genealogies and autobiographies unconsciously emerge in my visual practice. As a practicing artist, the world around me is often a dystopic one. Inherent insecurities, one-upmanship, power play, competitive and secretive personas coupled with the power of creative impetus and empathy within my community, lead to a wildly emotional and challenging landscape. It is often a living minefield where contemplation and turning inwards are imperative if one is to remain “normal”. What therefore is “normal”?

In the space of artistic creativity in which I live and survive, madness is the norm. Normal or “non-mad” is virtually oxymoronic. Often I sense that I go through flashes of what may be perceived by the non-artist commonly as “madness”. Both my lenticular prints emerge from this broad spectrum of the two ends of madness. *Falling Softly* is a digital collage of photographs taken over a period of time through my travels in India and Cambodia.



Mandakini Devi, *Falling Softly* (2012), digital collage with lenticular printing, 76 x 114 cm



Mandakini Devi, *Without Venus* (2012), digital collage with lenticular printing, 76 x 114 cm

Dom Elsner

'Reality is frequently inaccurate' (Douglas Adams)

My interest with the work submitted to this exhibition lies with the making of art objects that I find difficult to define, question and ultimately refine. It is the pleasurable experience of struggling to create engaging objects (or not) full of "questioning intent" and then attempting to improve upon them, often failing, that chaotically nudges my practice, often imperceptibly, forward.

These objects can (hopefully) be defined in numerous ways; they can communicate multiple messages and ask various questions of a viewer. They can, of course, be ignored. A viewer initially ignoring this work is something that I had considered when making *Tea Breaker & Boy Band Minus One*. I consider this reaction implicit in its creation and it is how I consider (possibly wrongly) the average viewer's reaction to it.

On the other hand, if someone's interest is peaked by the (disguised) mundane or found quality of much of what is exhibited here, I am hoping upon closer inspection or investigation that the true nature of the work would reveal itself and that the reality of whatever the viewer first imagined to be true could or would change.

The text part of the works in this exhibition 'Britain's Greatest Briton' concern Winston Churchill's attempt to challenge and to create new perspectives. I am hoping the titles of these works could effect investigation from a viewer leading to changes in positions or beliefs concerning the perception of Churchill. This was something I experienced during the initial investigation and making of the work.



Tea Breaker (2014) french polish and wax on masking tape over an electric plastic kettle



A Full Empty (2013). card, masking tape, wax and shellac over board. 110 x 20cm

Jez Giddings

Nature defeats us all, but we battle.

Capturing nature through photography and putting it in a framed prison gives me a sense of control. Placing myself above nature gives me a position from which to examine the inevitable transience of existence and to attempt some form of permanence.

I make the photographs and edit to produce symmetrical patterns. The patterns are those of repetition; my own repeated journeys to the beaches and woodlands of my homeland and the natural, never-ending cycles of tides, shingle, trees, leaves, weather and sunrises, over which I have no control. Neither did my father and neither will my daughters. The unstoppable force of nature washes our footsteps away forever.

At first I work with the natural rhythms to lay down initial marks of paint. Becoming brave, I take formal control and work the paint against this harmony. I struggle with this freedom but take comfort of working from within an historical, learned position. Cutting away and stripping back layers of paint helps me to quieten the panic of seeing the monstrosity of my own creation and responsibility.



Jez Giddings, Happy Never After - The Lost Elephant (2016), Original Photo Print on Kodak Pro Endura, Enamel Overpainting, Aluminium Frame, 106 x 71cm



Jez Giddings, Dungeoness 2 (2016), Original Photo Print on Kodak Pro Endura, Enamel Overpainting, Aluminium Frame, 106 x 71cm



Jez Giddings, Dungeoness 1 (2016), Original Photo Print on Kodak Pro Endura, Enamel Overpainting, Aluminium Frame, 106 x 71cm

Lucy Gresley

I understand art making as a mode of enquiry. Through this process, I explore what it means to be a person and in particular, how we are connected to each other. I am fascinated by relationships between things: how thinking relates to the outside world; how drawings intersect with physical space; the tension between representation and abstraction. I am also interested in transformative processes such as alchemy and psychotherapy.

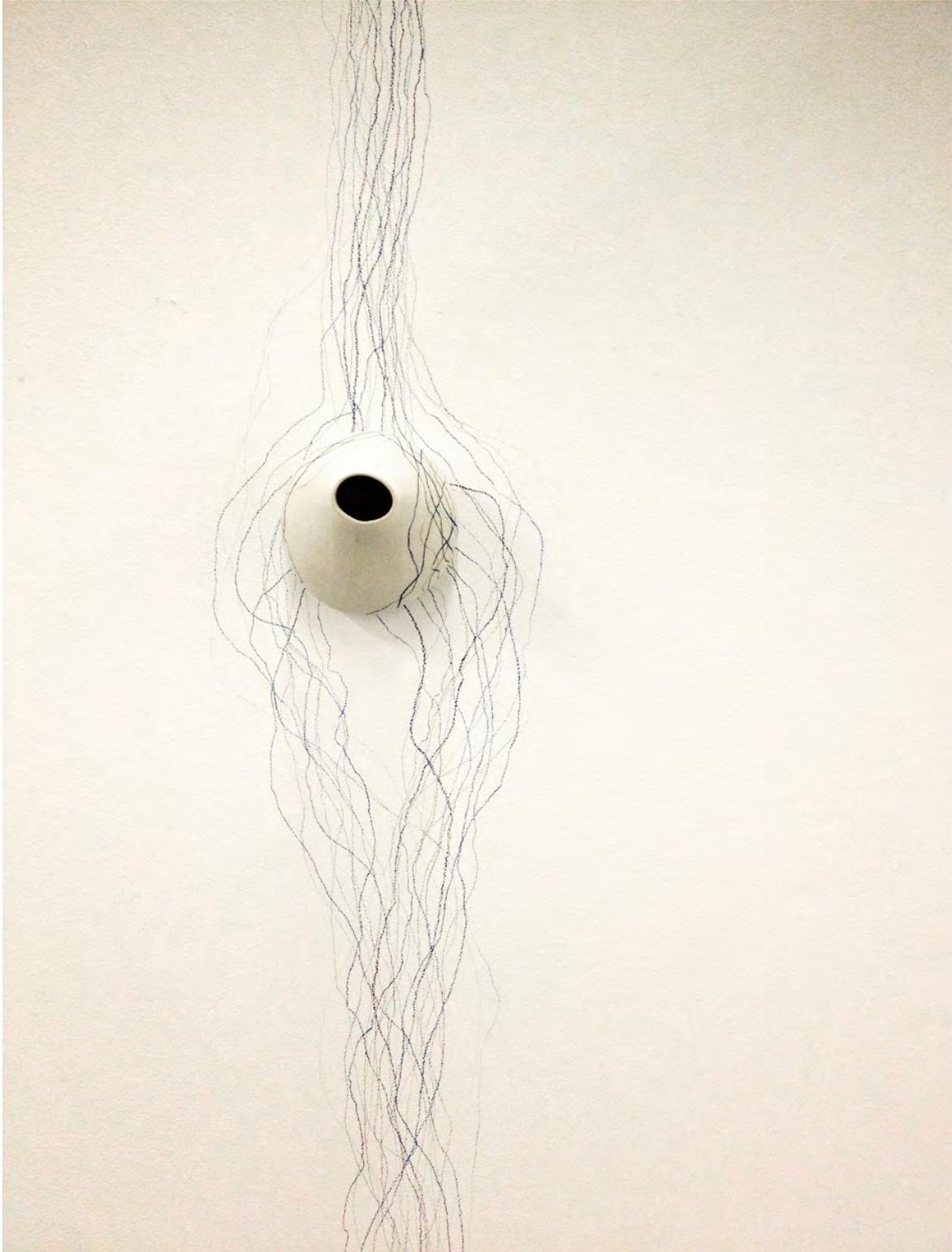
In my work as a clinical psychologist, being able to contain and deal with the emotions of clients was always important. My art practice developed alongside this work, perhaps as a way of holding and processing my own thoughts and feelings. I continue to refer to psychoanalytic ideas in my artwork, particularly Bracha Ettinger's Matrixial theory of trans-subjectivity and her concept of carriage and Wilfred Bion's notion of emotional containment.

My recent artwork involves an investigation of vessels as metaphors for people and their emotions. I am interested in the artefacts that we make and in what sense they can be understood as containers or carriers of thoughts and feelings; or as spaces in which emotional work can be undertaken; or as a form of communicating and re-communicating. I hope that, through my artworking, I can pose questions that other people can relate to, rather than presenting answers. I am interested in the idea of art as dialogue, linking maker and viewer.

Dr. Lucy Gresley is an artist, researcher and a qualified clinical psychologist.



Lucy Gresley, Her Delights (2015), mixed-media triptych on board 60 x 90 cm



Lucy Gresley, Flow (2015), wall drawing and glazed porcelain 12 x 10 x 10cm

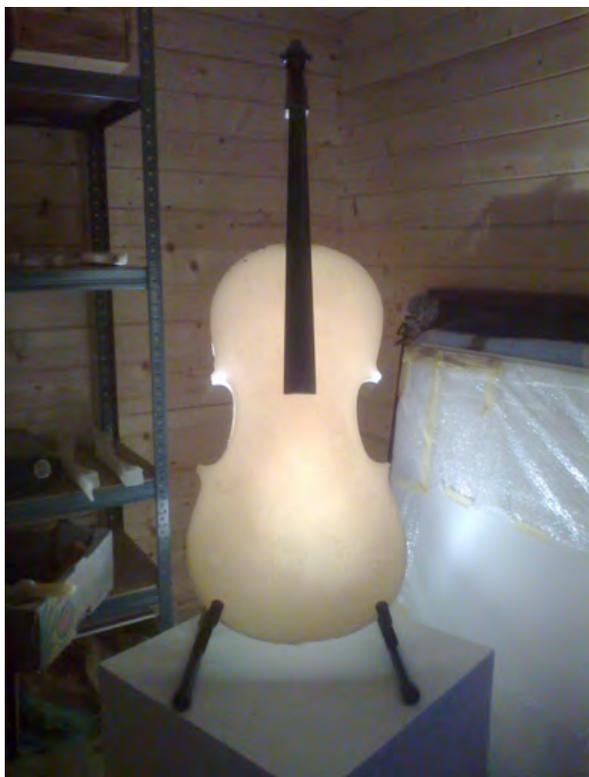
William Henry

My work is about the broken. I was broken and I express this brokenness through my sculpture,

An object might be broken but that may not render it useless, and with change it can be different, better – an object of beauty. You can see a broken leg or arm but a cancer or mental illness can be invisible to society. It is this that drives my sculptural practice. My work has a social dimension. It's about the human condition and our responses to each other and society's reaction to physical and mental disability. My work presents a dialogue between the made and the readymade and it focuses on the value of the raw material or commodity. The intrinsic value of a commodity might be small but when used, combined or manufactured its value is enhanced. A commodity has little value until it functions (is eaten, tasted, used or played).

Both my domestic and music-themed sculptures function as the object they represent, and as a metaphor for the human condition. The objects' origins are easily identifiable, but through the casting process, they have been transformed into a new reality – that of sculpture.

Although my sculptural practice explores the legacy and contemporary significance of the Duchampian ready-made, the work also has a surreal inflection which explores the estranging effects of subverting the everyday; fusing, flexing, melting and melding domestic objects, musical instruments and personal possessions.



*William Henry, Cello 1 (2014), wax, wood and wire
1.9m x .8 x .5m*



*William Henry, Washed Out (2007) metal bath
secured to a plinth 1.5m x .5m x .7m*

Mark Howland

The landscape is painted both from the artist's memory and of a specific time and place; the painting creates a new space, imagined. The juxtaposition of genres and the symbolism of objects hint at the surrealist landscapes of Paul Nash and of the motif of The Fisher King myth: telling of injury, impotence and barrenness. The painting represents at once a sustainable, productive landscape teetering on the edge of a city, but one now destined to be lost to the sons and daughters of its current inhabitants.

The reference to *The Fisher King* supports TS Eliot's *The Wasteland* and the recurring motif I have in the landscapes I paint. They look at the madness of the world population's continuing growth as predicted by the Malthusian catastrophe argument – a discourse which predicts that population growth will outpace agricultural growth unless controlled and that such a result will be ecological and environmental collapse.

The locations I paint are often from within the so-called "Garden of England" – the name itself suggests an historic modus operandus. The purpose of the agricultural spaces are now unable to provide that security and are becoming more redundant and therefore changing to accommodate the migration of people and housing that they require. The paintings have a nostalgic reference and romantic notion of this position against an impending apocalyptic prediction.



Mark Howland, *Mackerel Sky* (2014), oil on canvas 1.5m x 1m

Emma Moody-Smith

Richard Serra's *Verb List* (1967-68), sets down the infinitives of 84 verbs and 24 possible forces and contexts as a linguistic bank of possible artistic actions in response to particular material qualities. Taking this as my starting point, my verb list might include:

to de-clutter
to purge
to empty...

I like to pierce paper, gradually weakening its structure with holes until the once firm support has more resemblance to a malleable textile.

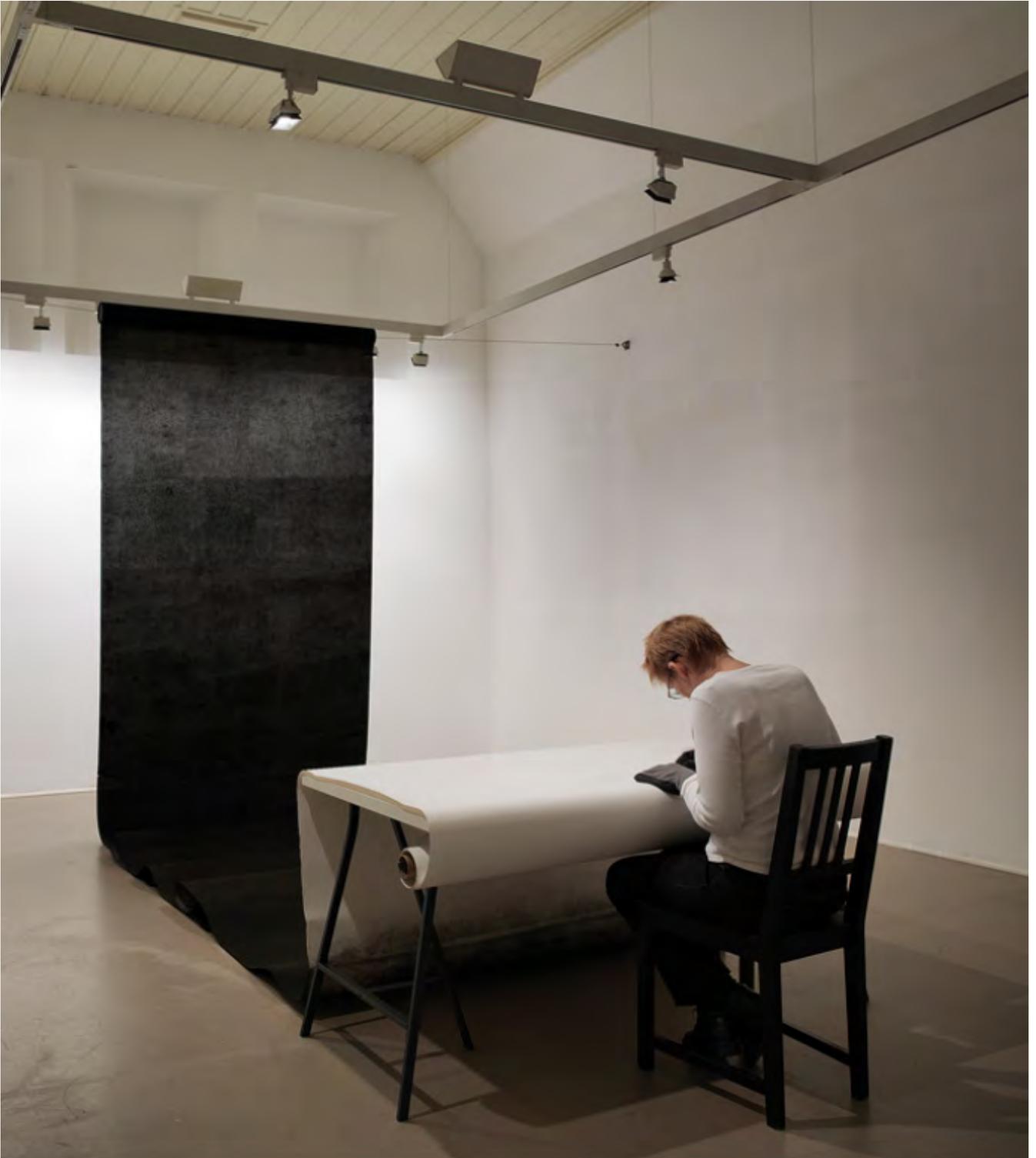
Most times I work alone, connecting art making to a form of personal therapy. The repetitive action of piercing paper becomes both a mental "displacement activity" and a test of physical endurance. It is a place to withdraw to and in which to explore my mental state.

Intriguing groupings of holes are formed that become dense chasms when blacked-out with pigment. I like the loose, powdery nature of this material; it is a free spirit, yet both messy and troublesome to deal with.

Ephemeral in nature, the fragile artworks I create are a form of catharsis, a madness of quiet and contemplative intensity. I like to think that I can provide the viewer with an entrance point, willing us all to question the things that consume us, challenging us to assess their worth.



Untitled (2013) pigment on pierced paper series (ongoing) pigment on pierced paper



Untitled (2012) pigment on pierced paper

Angus Pryor

'Since a three-dimensional object casts a two-dimensional shadow, we should be able to imagine the unknown four-dimensional object whose shadow we are. I for my part am fascinated by the search for a one-dimensional object that casts no shadow at all.'

(Marcel Duchamp)

I am interested in the two-dimensional shadow and how through the re-introduction into the language of painting it creates its own dialogue.

Artists act as voyeurs of the real, they mirror what is happening in society and this is echoed in the practice here. As an audience we will often see homages to society in grandiose exhibitions and I want these paintings to continue within this tradition. The paintings I exhibit here are reflections on the real events they document which are often unnoticed. They evidence how in society we allow pain, humiliation, suffering and abuse and how it has become acceptable.

The paintings act as a documentary or commentary on these events. My starting point is often my own reaction to what I see on a daily basis, whether in academia or in my personal space. I have reflected in this work instances of violence, both in the form of fiction and in reality.

I use a post-conceptual technique as a way of making, in order to take what are objects in the world and use them conceptually to insert a dialogue of provocation and unease. These paintings reflect their own content and process and are the other end of madness, my own need for madness as an artist and curator.



Angus Pryor, Pub Fight (2014), oil and caulk on canvas 3m x 3m



Angus Pryor, God's Wrath (2015), 3m x 3m, oil and caulk on canvas

Mike Walker

I make non-representational paintings. I do not start from observed phenomena and there is no process of abstracting from something seen in the external world. I think of my paintings as things-in-themselves. Avoiding depiction means that I have to find other strategies for making paintings. It's not that I create rules, but rather that through a process of working various possibilities are eliminated and others come to the fore. Each sequence explores a particular set of variables and common factors.

There is something impersonal in the way that I work. I'm not responding to my immediate environment or attempting to convey anything of my personal experience, certainly not in emotional terms. I edit out not only anything that too obviously resembles an observed form – a person, a teacup, whatever – but also representational space. A shallow pictorial space, for me, is partly about suppressing representational forms. I'm not much interested, then, in ideas of madness, or for that matter of health, at least not whilst I'm painting. The phenomenology of painting, for me, is more about perception and the way that we think through our motor actions.

I cannot control, however, what happens in some my paintings. In a small number of paintings I made sometime in the middle of 2013, the pours of ink and their interaction with overlaid tracers of lines and grids seem redolent of something damaged. These strike me, after the event, as containing a form of darkness that might be read as psychological. I put them forward here as part of the debate around how madness might make its way into a visual image.



No.18 (2013) all images are mixed media, dimensions 112 x 80cm.



Mike Walker, Detail, No.16 (2013), mixed-media 112 x 80cm

Heidi Yssennagger

“Why do you have to paint such horrible things? Why can’t you paint something nice instead? I love those little birds you do...”

Ahh! If only life was all hearts and flowers and tweeting little birds! Like many artists before me, I paint what I know. I paint the struggles of having lived my entire adult life with chronic illness. I paint my heartbreaks and depressions, surgical procedures and recoveries; more recently as in *Present*, oil on canvas (2015), I painted a ‘selfie’ taken in A&E before I had the knowledge that I had broken my neck, fractured my spine in two other places and shattered my wrist into hundreds of pieces, in a freak cycling accident on a beautiful sunny day.

Painting painful experiences allows the experience to be externalised; it is an abreactive therapy, a release from the pain. There is a meditative state that one enters into that somehow heals some of the pain; the experience of painting itself often brings about its own pain and challenges one to overcome it. And there is (if you’re lucky) a pleasurable release at the completion of the process.

At the other end of the madness that is my personal journey, *Life Support* (2009) oil on canvas, captures the euphoric freedom that can be felt simply by experiencing good health after prolonged illness and struggles. So yes, I can paint you a pretty little bird, and I might if you’re nice to me; but I need to paint the other stuff too. I need to paint the mad, crazy, painful existence that I experience on this earth, both to free myself from pain and also to help others, non-artist sufferers, to understand and cope with theirs.



Heidi Yssennagger, *Life Support* (2009), oil on board 100cm x 60cm

Interdisciplinary Symposium 14th April 2016 APT Gallery Deptford 6pm-8pm

Both Ends of Madness

An exhibition on the effects of wellbeing on contemporary visual arts practice, curated by Angus Pryor

This interdisciplinary symposium will explore and discuss some of the issues and themes suggested by the exhibition, including the iconography and content of specific works on display. There will be an open Q&A session with participation warmly invited from the audience and members of the general public. All are very welcome.

Symposium Panel Contributors:

- **Janet Sayers** (Keynote speaker) is Emeritus Professor of Psychoanalytic Psychology at the University of Kent at Canterbury where she works as a Clinical Psychologist for the NHS. Her books include *Freud's Art* (Routledge 2007) and *Art, Psychoanalysis, and Adrian Stokes: A Biography* (Karnac 2015).
- **Angus Pryor** BA Hons MA (Panel Chair) is Reader in Fine Art and Head of the School of Art & Design, University of Gloucestershire. Angus completed his Art & Design Foundation at Wimbledon School of Art, his BA Hons. at Bath College and his MA at what was then the Kent Institute of Art & Design. Angus was previously Director of Fine Art at the University of Kent before moving to his present position in 2013.
- **Tony Gammidge** is an Artist, Filmmaker, Art Therapist, Lecturer at Brighton University and an Arts in Health practitioner. Tony has worked principally in psychiatric and forensic settings. Since 2008 he has convened and run video and animation projects in secure units, prisons and in psychiatric treatment centres. In this work he collaborates with service users to make short animation films which aim to give participants a voice and a chance to tell their own story in their own way. Over 25 films have been made as part of these projects many of which have won Koestler awards. Please see: www.tonygammidge.com
- **Dr Grant Pooke** is a Senior Lecturer in the History of Art at the University of Kent. Grant has teaching interests which span contemporary art, Cold War visual cultures and approaches to the teaching of art history. His publications include *Art History: The Basics* (co-author, Routledge, 2008), *Contemporary British Art: An Introduction* (Routledge, 2011) and *Narratives for Indian Modernity: The Aesthetic of B.M.Anand* (co-author, Harper Collins, 2016).

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<Both Ends of Madness>

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Participating artists: John Brennan, Richard Brooks, John Butterworth, Anjula Crocker, Mandakini Devi, Dom Elsner, Jez Giddings, Lucy Gresley, William Henry, Mark Howland, Emma Moody-Smith, Angus Pryor, Mike Walker & Heidi Yssennagger.

How to find A.P.T. Gallery:

