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Paris
LA
Vienna
New York
Brussels

Continents

Europe
North America

Show

Solo
Group
Biennale
Art Fair
Fierce Festival
Artist Profile
Artist Interview
DRAF
Shop
Shop: Editions
Shop: Publications
Camden Arts Centre
Jerwood Visual Arts

Medium

Painting
Sculpture
Installation
Photography
Performance
Architecture
Curation
Video
Sound
Drawing
Broadcasting

Archive

Apr 2014
Mar 2014
Feb 2014
Jan 2014
Dec 2013
Nov 2013
Oct 2013
Sep 2013
Aug 2013
Jul 2013
Jun 2013



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Tintype Contemporary Art, 107 Essex Road, London N1 2SL, 9 Apr 2014

Flora Parrott | Fixed Position



< 1 / 16 >

Artist : Flora Parrott

Title : Stalagmite Sculpture

Date(s) : 2014

Dimensions : 214 ht (14 x 14 base) cm, other dimensions variable

Material : Ply & jesso with photocopies, steel rod, concrete base, mounted screenprint, pressed flower between glass, vellum between glass, string on grid, black sand

Website : <http://www.tintypegallery.com/>

Credit : Photo: Ollie Hammick

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Flora Parrott: Fixed Position

Tintype, London

12 March – 19 April 2014

Review by Ciara Healy

Flora Parrott's solo exhibition 'Fixed Position' is a brave attempt to address 'being' in the world. It playfully and skilfully gives form to the ways and means by which human existence copes with the immensity of space, time and darkness. It acknowledges that existence is constructed on no plan or theory which the intellect can grasp, because, as the 18th-century writer William James once argued, it is 'transcendent everywhere.'

In order to cope with this immensity, human nature tends to create a 'boundary condition,' a term coined by the French philosopher Caillois, to describe our need to construct hierarchies, divisions and fields of knowledge as a means to overcome our fear of being devoured by the enormity of what really exists all around us.

But what if we could see these apparently separate realities within a single field? Parrott's 'Certainty of Position' (2014) and 'Certainty of Position – Screen,' (2014) endeavours to give form to that possibility.

'Certainty of Position'(2014) is an assemblage floor piece, which includes a laser printed photograph of the artist's feet standing on a sheet of copper. Peeping out from underneath this sheet of paper is an actual sheet of copper. Beside this, is another image on paper, of that same sheet of copper with the sweat mark traces of the artists' feet. This configuration of images and objects, like the other sculptural or printed works in the show, act as a diagram of, or sometimes shrine to, a state of simultaneous distinction and integration, virtual and real.

'Certainty of Position – Screen' (2014) continues this dialogue with a photograph of a glass

screen, of the kind one might find covering an iPad or Kindle, leaning against a rock deep inside a cave. This photograph is printed on acrylic and mounted on a table. In front of which, on a smaller table, the glass screen itself is displayed as a found object. Each individual piece then is reliant on another, distinct from it, but inescapably always a part of it.

Other works, such as 'Horn Circle' (2014) and 'Stalagmite Sculpture' (2014) allude to more ancient, shamanic perceptions of reality. 'Bone Circle,' (2014) a bleached white strung circle of cow bones, hangs over a circular arrangement of digital images of bones. In such close proximity, the always-real bones, and the virtual-made-manifest digital images become radically transformed.

The show is criss-crossed with motion; a spruce black ladder leads up and down, plaited black rope weaves back and across, precarious, sagging, tense. The core notion of co-existence and multiple realities are explored repeatedly in each constellation of works, but always from a new location. The irony then, is that nothing is fixed in 'Fixed Position'.

This continuous movement means we experience these constellations as emotional dilemmas rather than prescriptive sculptural claims about reality. And in this regard, Parrott is developing an awakened visual language, spoken with many voices. For example, geologist Andrew Hurst will present a talk on Deep Time during the course of the exhibition and artist Jack Tan will develop a physical and sonic performance that considers echo. These contributions allow Parrott's work to take on a role akin to that of the theatrical prop. Re-orientated in this way, notions of being momentarily slip the anchor of a reality confined by empiricism, and return once more to the transcendental.