

“3 in the morning part 2”

Dan Arps

26 September – 7 November, 2015

Opening: 26 September, 5-7 PM

Press Release: “A Palace To Screw The Grid” by S.T. Lore

Named after DJ Screw’s influential hip-hop mix tape released in Houston 1996, ‘3 in the morning part 2’ is another multi-layered version of classics. This mini survey of Dan Arps is chopped and screwed from his personal archives, collected magazine covers, and a rich exhibition history. Employing an array of parallel installation strategies in the gallery space, assembled with the logic of a dungeon mapper (code for RPG game builders), he moves against domestic logic, mapping new coordinates. There is nothing mysterious about it: enough happens. But then on closer inspection, it seems perhaps too even, with the air of being assembled by a robot. Like a palace squatted by a faction of video addicts; stolen footage re-edited; previous works dragged from a bunker and dropped down again. An Amazon buyer praising Screw nails it: “it never gets old because he adds more samples to the mix.”

While DJ Screw stole 90’s Hip Hop on a codeine high and bootlegged it in the street, Dan blends video downloads and public imagery (think 4Chan and Reddit) into a hybrid instruction manual: “*Explaining Things Redux / Mandelbrot Set Vs Deep Trance Channel*”. It is personal. It is dark. People are filmed in front of CD racks confessing unknown voices. There is medication and meditation; and an anarchist explaining the world order. But underneath lurk historical layers, droning at a different pitch. Typing a late night email, Dan wrote ‘A Phony Caro’ referring to a modernist respect for Anthony Caro. Despite the spelling mistake, I think in this small error (*importantly human*) a more precise transfer occurred. And there is something funny about 3am, whether partying or sleeping too much, or working too hard, ideas become encrypted in a kind of covert communication. In ‘Early One Morning’ 1962, Caro arranged bright red planks along an airy horizontal axis: “like the relationship of notes within a piece of music ... the work has no single focus of interest.” 30 years earlier, Alberto Giacometti built a model out of matchsticks (an obsessively romantic piece) he called ‘The Palace at 4am’. Inspired by the presence of a woman who “transported every moment into a state of enchantment ... where at the least false movement a whole section would collapse.” A strange bird hovers above an imprisoned spine. Three squares plot a background over a human figure. It is delicate, romantic, and dark: a peculiar diagram of our trapped condition.

David Carr (recently deceased *New York Times* media journalist) said: ‘If you write for long enough, you will end up typing all the way to your own front door.’ And in many ways this is true: whatever creative activity is undertaken. Born and bred in Christchurch, Dan roamed a city laid-out in a square of parallel and right-angled streets. In 2013, he invoked his urban experience by holding an open workshop at *Temple for Christchurch* on Peterborough Street. Inviting local residents to carve into two wooden picnic tables, it related on some level “to memories of hanging around parks, seeing graffiti shift from hip hop influenced tagging and bubble writing; to phone numbers left in public toilets.” Yeah, we might peck around a coop; scratch at our little patch of earth; a population, sleepless, drugged, and haunted, our finance anxieties formed by numbers ‘the simplest nothing reduced to everything.’ Rather than lurch for an easy reading, Dan works in dark subversion: printing images from an automated kiosk (maybe a golf swing; a stolen AIDS booklet) he is corrupting the architectural pathos with his hands; arresting an intimate way to shake off the grid.

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