

Some samples of texts Sources available if quoting.

Richard Higlett's approach to making work is based on beginning with a problem; by imposing a series of deliberate constraints that will ultimately shape an outcome which is open to chance but chance existing within a framework. Chance being not something random but an unpredictable collision of factors that have been set in motion on paths with trajectories that intersect each other somewhere in time. When there is a collision, new paths are created. This is not unique to him it is common to every person, object, and element in existence. Everything is the result of these collisions. The physical results are what we call chance.

Deal or no deal ANON 2008

Extract 1 In embarking on what could be seen as 'acts of folly' his work lends meaning to the very thing it is not. In the local group a series of images of planets were taken with either a low-resolution digital camera or mobile phone. The resulting specks of light are more the result of the sensor in the devices attempt to read the image and the unimaginable scale of a planet is shown through the limitations of manmade and earthbound technology. First recording was an image of Mars taken when the planet was the closest to earth in 67 million years. This involved a 2.1 mega pixel camera with a x4 zoom. When the image was taken the artist moved forward to get closer to the subject. The print of Mars is re-printed for each exhibition, always different, the images is more an expression of the computer and printer employed to reproduce the image that is a screen grab of the origin file.

Extract 2 Higlett is interested in what he describes as 'non-visual'. This is a state between being visible and invisible. It describes an object that does not demand to be seen and is while on view also hidden, as it exists outside the conditioned reading of a space. It maybe just located at the corner of our eyes. Ultimately the viewer may miss the work, it maybe tailored to a specific type of person but it is not important if 1 or 100 people witness the work. It is the negotiation of the experience by people who discover or find the work. In the text work 2010 a rectangle of gallery wall is painted in a satin varnish, onto this the text referenced in the title is painted with gloss varnish. Only at a particular angle does the text reveal itself. In version 2 of the same piece, the text is etched onto the glass face of the bulb housing of a torch. The text is then transferred onto any object the torch illuminates and transposes what ever this is into a work of art. Version 2 was inspired by the ancient Greek understanding that human sight was possible because light was projected from the eyes akin to a lighthouse and the world was otherwise in total darkness.

Extract 3 In A Song For Jack he created a canine choir, which performed ultimately once and was a celebration of the moment. The dogs were accompanied by string arrangement by the artist that shifted from Cmaj and Dmaj. The variations designed to encourage the dogs to respond. Extract 4 Music has featured more increasingly in his work, although it could be said to be avant-garde. In Music for Retractable Ball Point Pen, a score is available for people working in offices. The gallery version involves the score recreated by hand on the gallery wall using the pen used for playing the piece. The score is repeatedly drawn over until the ink is finished or the point of the pen is damaged leaving the pen useful only for playing the piece. This cyclic relationship between the pen creating the score and being the device to perform the piece appears in a number of other works.
flourish text

Axis Biog Artist and curator - Co-director of Mermaid and Monster, Cardiff Open Frequency selector from January 2008 Richard Higlett is an artist/curator working across a range of media. Based in Cardiff and the West Midlands, he is a co-founder of Mermaid and Monster, an artist-led agency representing emerging and established contemporary artists at International Art Fairs. Mermaid and Monster also exists to curate exhibitions of emerging artist and commission new projects. He is also a co-founder Artists Resource Cardiff (arc) an artist-led networking initiative for the capital whose website hub went live in January 2008. As an artist he is a previous recipient of a Creative Wales Award from the Arts Council, he has exhibited internationally as himself and as the imaginary outsider artist Wally French. His

work involves the creation of various acts of folly and creating objects that are, in his words non-visual in that they do not demand to be observed and sometimes can remain unobserved by the viewer. He is currently writing a book of fictional first pages in collaboration with the writer Leona Jones. He has worked as a project manager for Cardiff Council, working on the 2005 Cultural Program, involved in initiating the first Cardiff Contemporary Visual Art Month and was the education co-ordinator for the first Artes Mundi Prize in 2004. He is also an experienced lecturer who was recently invited by Axis to be a graduate adviser for the 2007 MA show at UWIC, Cardiff. In 2009, he worked as the Project Manager for Wales at the 53rd Venice Biennale of Art. CAS BIOG biography Based in Cardiff, Higlett is co-director of Mermaid and Monster Higlett, and co-founder and Librarian of ARC (Artist Resource Cardiff). statement Higlett's work involves bring meaning and value to practices that maybe considered acts of folly. This involves the creation of works in many mediums including sound and literature. A strand of his practice looks at work that is non-visual, as opposed to invisible, which involves making sculptural objects that do not demand to be directly observed and may be witnessed by only a small number of people. This idea informs recent pieces that look at actions in life which we may view as incidental and yet still being intrinsically creative.

G39 Prop Show Richard Higlett's photograph of his sculpture Prop spells out 2004AD, an elegy to the Countdown font, a typeface designed in 1966 by Colin Brignall. In its day this typeface was aspirational, designed to reflect a futuristic utopia in a decade where space exploration was embryonic. The clumsy typeface embodies the optimism that would ultimately never be realised. The future of then didn't happen as the Cold War played out and the space race became grounded. Now seemingly misplaced in a timeless wood, Prop operates between the boundaries of Nature and Artifice. The metallic structure signifies the presence of man, yet the piece becomes ultimately lost in the surrounding environment: the mirrored surface doesn't reflect the shiny new age of the 21st century, only the trees that surround it. 'In a recent essay Richard wrote: In Mel Brookes' classic comedy western 'Blazing Saddles' (1974), Bart played by Cleavon Little rides through a wild west town. As the scene extends we see the timber backs of the Salons and Livery Stores, two-dimensional props. Riding on further, the joke is embellished as we see an orchestra in the desert creating the dramatic musical score. The etiquette of the flat screen theatre of Cinema is broken and briefly we are transported out of the film's illusionary environment. It is this transition of experience that interests me and the moment of realisation that something it not as it appears.' It is perhaps this that unites these three artists; nothing is as it seems. Art as the act of folly A returning theme in my work is the idea of the value of folly, whether working through processes and actions that contradict the purpose of a piece of equipment or using material for the purpose of concept over its primary practical function. This is easier to explain by example, one such activity involves producing near exact recreations of existing notice boards but with all the information blurred out by computer, using technology to not represent, convey or communicate. (See an example on gallery page as In a Big Country (Dedicated to the memory of Stuart Adamson) 2003.) These objects are created to function in the space like a theatrical prop in reality and temporarily dislocate the viewer from their relationship with the written word and printed image.

In 10,000 Reflective Copper Discs (2004) a carpet of 10,000 pennies was laid on a street corner as part of a citywide public arts project. The work was a comment on the nature and value of public art and how while artists see objects in other imaginary forms, generally people see them for their primary function. The piece existed as art for 20 minutes before it was taken, without permission, by the local community and briefly 'enriching' the local economy. The removal was documented. (2004)

In Red Planet (2006), the planet Mars, was photographed when it was that the closest point to earth in 67 million years (26th August 2004). Using a low-resolution digital camera, the planet occupied less than 1% of the original image. This natural wonder was then enlarged on a home PC and open to the interpretation of commercially available technology. The resulting image being more a representation of the computer's parameters than the original image.

The Interludes (2004) a four screen installation looks at those moments when the mind is perceived a being idyll while it appears through the body to be creative and performing a musical piece on a subconscious level. Four characters in an office present four echoes of classical pieces relating to their personally and position in the hierarchy of the working environment. The young office assistant files her nails mimicking a violinist to the rhythm of Vivaldi's Spring, the Manager raps his fingers on the day planner tapping out Rossini's

William Tell Overture, his secretary taps her nails on her cup suggesting the notes of Morning from Greig's Peer Gynt Suite while a salesman talks on the phone as he clicks his pen to the rhythm of Prokofiev's theme from Romeo and Juliet in his head. The resulting combination produces a percussive music perceived as out of nothing.

While in Prop I was interested in creating a hidden monument, sited in woods, a 10 metre mirrored sign/folly to a 1960's view of the 21st century, its surface reflecting back the woods. It is visually and conceptually lost like the understanding of the future from my childhood. Currently I am working on a series of animations which are cyclic and attempt to operate as projections of light of flat surfaces, appearing as static they 'perform' momentarily over the duration of the exhibition, the action possibly seen by only a small number of viewers or possibly no one. The artists in *Apropos of Nothing* appear to have few discernible links between their practices. At face value they all appear to operate in different and idiosyncratic spheres of communication and expression. What they do share however is the ability to take elements from the real world - idle moments or discarded objects - and transform them.

In the window by Richard Higlett presents a level but chaotic playing field where all 'goals' are appropriately inappropriate. This hijack of precise architectural models and the beautiful game creates a minefield of negotiation and consideration for its players. Competitiveness and rigid rule structures become usurped by anarchic and more creative game play. Text on work by Artist Anthony Shapland from exhibition *Apropos of Nothing* g39 Gallery Cardiff.

Objects of Art Every time I see a vendor in a city I ask them to make be a wire piece. I say 'I would like one made for Marcel Duchamp' and ask for a flower with a blue glass centre. The sellers have all learnt the same technique but add subtle differences. Some curl the ends of letters in tighter circles, some the process is more angular. The thickness of the wire and rigid process still has room for human individuality. The stands vary. While I ponder the received notion that it is possible for two things to be the same? (2003-present)

A Text by curator Anthony Shapland

Richard Higlett's photograph of his sculpture *Prop* spells out 2004AD, an elegy to the Countdown font, a typeface designed in 1966 by Colin Brignall. In its day this typeface was aspirational, designed to reflect a futuristic utopia in a decade where space exploration was embryonic. The clumsy typeface embodies the optimism that would ultimately never be realised. The future of then didn't happen as the Cold War played out and the space race became grounded. Now seemingly misplaced in a timeless wood, *Prop* operates between the boundaries of Nature and Artifice. The metallic structure signifies the presence of man, yet the piece becomes ultimately lost in the surrounding environment: the mirrored surface doesn't reflect the shiny new age of the 21st century, only the trees that surround it. 'In a recent essay Richard wrote: In Mel Brookes' classic comedy western *Blazing Saddles* (1974), Bart played by Cleavon Little rides through a wild west town. As the scene extends we see the timber backs of the Salons and Livery Stores, two-dimensional props. Riding on further, the joke is embellished as we see an orchestra in the desert creating the dramatic musical score. The etiquette of the flat screen theatre of Cinema is broken and briefly we are transported out of the film's illusionary environment. It is this transition of experience that interests me and the moment of realisation that something is not as it appears.' It is perhaps this that unites these three artists; nothing is as it seems. In between the worlds of the visible and invisible is the area I would describe as non-visual. Items exist, they are solid, they can be seen but 'they' do not desire or nurture a direct visual interaction from the viewer. My work does not demand to be looked at but can be discovered by the viewer, or not. Its placing impacts on a certain environment, but only when it is observed. Does anything exist before it is witnessed or recalled by the voice? There is a German children's game that looks at the idea of something being there and not there, a binary condition. With one representing a tangible object and zero representing an intangible, non-visible object usually existing as thoughts, semantically or as text in their primary non physical form. Art came up with a third condition of existence, that of representation, so much so that photography has become adopted as the substitute for the reality of presence. When we refer to a photograph we usually point and refer to images of people as the actual presence of the person, that's him, there! we exclaim. My work is about this replacement of the actual and how the parameters of observation can be altered to create work that aspires to be 'non visual' as opposed to being expected as visual and not actually invisible. We can now create representations of objects that only suggest some of the characteristics of the original but are able to perform as mimics or props of objects when sited within the condition of physical items within society and the

complicit acceptance of the nature of things in the world. For example; a scarecrow, a decoy duck or, as used in the second world war, an inflatable tank used to fool reconnaissance aircraft into recording inflated figures for enemy troop movement and numbers. All these examples are impersonations of something else. Direct physical ocular engagement quickly realigns the object as itself, but my interest is the period before contact when it exists as assumed and not eager to aspire the gaze. What you see in today's society is rarely what you get, as perception is influenced by value and the meaning and value of objects is shifted by factors such as design, style, and consumerism to a point where the condition of people, in relation to objects, is one of compliance. Our movement within urban society is monitored subconsciously by our relationship with our surroundings. In Mel Brookes classic comedy western *Blazing Saddles* (1974), Bart, played by Cleavon Little, rides through a stereotypical Wild West town. As the scene extends, and the camera moves out, we see the scaffolding and timber props supporting the facades of salons and livery stores. Riding on further, the joke on the myth of film is embellished as we see an orchestra in the desert musically underpinning a scene we feel we are familiar with from hundreds of iconic westerns. The etiquette is broken and briefly we are transported out of the film's illusionary environment. It is this transition of experience that interests me coupled with the moment of realisation that something is not as it blindly appears. This transition reoccurs in my work to a greater or lesser extent.

Anna Powell interview Prop

AP Making your artworks hidden/not easy to see could be seen to suggest a hide-and-seek type game, where a moment of discovery either happens spontaneously by chance or as a result of actively searching for the artwork. Can you say something about how your work might be a component in a hide and seek-type scenario, or how else you might consider its hiddenness to be a playful element of the work?

RH If I looked at it deeply I'd say artists fundamentally make work that is a reflection of themselves. Their psyche and personality, their art is another way they physically manifest in the world in an alternative form. Maybe reflection is too simplistic maybe the work is an expression of the type of person the artist really is (unknown to them) or aspires to be. If it is hide and seek then its me personally playing hide and seek through the work. As a child I used to hide a lot or more often play dead, expecting shock on my discovery and this may have something to do with the idea I am presence in a space. The discovery could indicate the work is alive and dead when hidden. Like the theory the ancient Greeks had on the nature of light and the eye where everything was in darkness until the gaze of the eye fell upon it and it was illuminated. I recall a wonderful diagram where a figure appears like a light house as beams of light flow from their eyes. Pity this has been disproved. This is interesting in terms of how the work is durational but of an unfixed duration as each 'viewer' (in the way hide and seek involves looking for a variable time) negotiates the space the object resides. In terms of playful I would say it is maybe more sinister or darker relating to the moment of discovery while there is a period in the dark, the time before.

AP Do you think a game of hide and seek in this context will always require 'clues' as to the existence or even whereabouts of the work, and did you purposely incorporate such clues (examples would be great) into the exhibiting of your work?

RH Clues are concessions to the way of looking that already informs the viewer. In work like 'before' the projection was as thin/vague as possible on the wall nearly white onto white. Here there was a clue, the projector a device for transmitting 'an artwork'. In the way a guitar leant against a wall with strings facing outwards may still provoke the viewer to imagine a tune in their head. I like this example even if it's not accurate as the projector is on and transmitting light as opposed to being ready to be played where creativity is latent or residual rather than the more mute relationship a projector has with showing work. In the print version of a text piece I'm working on at this point in time; "the ultimate art is unseen unheard untasted but understood", the paper may appear blank but it is also the perimeter and so within its area the gaze is cast. The edge of the paper is a type of clue but it can be equally misleading. For clue you could also say boundary. I'm working on a series of images at night and a recent film that uses sounds and images recorded at night. During these hours when the city sleeps and people are unconscious (or it could be implied non-visual) an inverse clue is used by advising the viewer when the images were recorded, everyone slept. Revealing of this information creates a layer of mystery. It both informs and redirects the viewer towards something open/ambiguous, this being the night. (The notion of the night being a place where 'things' are hidden.)

AP If indeed you do consider the work in question to incorporate elements of play; of searching and discovering, what, in your opinion, is the outcome of this/is it a different sort of encounter that is achieved compared with more conventional sorts of artworks?

RH Whether play or not the outcome is the enhanced experience of discovery and 'victory' within the viewer. The discovery (or the effort subconsciously) has a pay off, the unexpected impact over the knowing eye of 'a' formally conditioned viewer. The encounter is a one to one with the work and my psyche. Taking ideas from Mark Twain, one of the first recorded people to use impersonators of himself to attend book launches, the work is an ambassador for my presence but this is not different to all art maybe its just the way I introduce myself....I don't know for sure but who really could say they know themselves? This process of a journey of engagement as opposed to being placed in front of you in a frame is an important part of the narrative for the idea. The negotiation but relate to the ideas behind the piece and not hidden or concealed purely for the sake of it, this would be a gimmick while conversely the hiding of works should bring an alternative narrative to the work beyond its original stated intent. For example, if I leant a Constable painting facing towards a gallery wall some one say its now a comment on a disappearing rural landscape but this is applied and implied over the stated meaning for the piece.
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