

Then, at last

MA Contemporary Art Practice
Graduates 2020-2021

Andy Cluer

Susan Hamston

Deborah Last

Gary Marshall-Stevens

Donna Mitchell

Brad North

Antonina Szram

18-27 June 2021

**The Levinsky Gallery,
University of Plymouth**

10:00-17:00

**Tuesday to Sunday
(closed Mondays)**

Free admission

MA Contemporary Art Practice

MA Contemporary Art Practice is a three-year part-time course which welcomes highly motivated and independent practitioners who want the opportunity to balance work and external commitments with postgraduate education. Students are encouraged to experiment and take risks in a creative, challenging and supportive environment while expanding their critical and practical skills as well as professional network.

for more information:

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With thanks to Paul Burtnyk
from the Faculty Technical Team
for technical support.
And thank you to Mary Costello
and The Arts Institute team.

INTRODUCTION

Embarking on a Masters course in Contemporary Art is an act of revision, of reflecting on and examining practice. Artists ask how they make work, who for, and why. They consider their materials, processes and the concepts they operate with. This is a challenge, but it is also an opportunity to shift direction, to try something new, to rejig. The works presented here are the outcome of this process of questioning, and of the encounters with each other as a cohort. After a year of disruption, dispersal, disappointment, an exhibition emerges.

This show is testament to the strategies the artists have developed to sustain their art making, and the resilience they have found in their studios, in their networks, and in the resources they have learnt to draw on. Here are objects, sounds, images, texts that evidence the sustaining of practice through adversity. These works are encountered in their openness to the audience, and in their evidence of commitment to practice, to continuing, to keeping going. A gesture of connection, of communication, they invite you to meet them on these terms.

Andy Cluer



Sound Rock (part of 'Grimsland') (2021)

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Andy Cluer

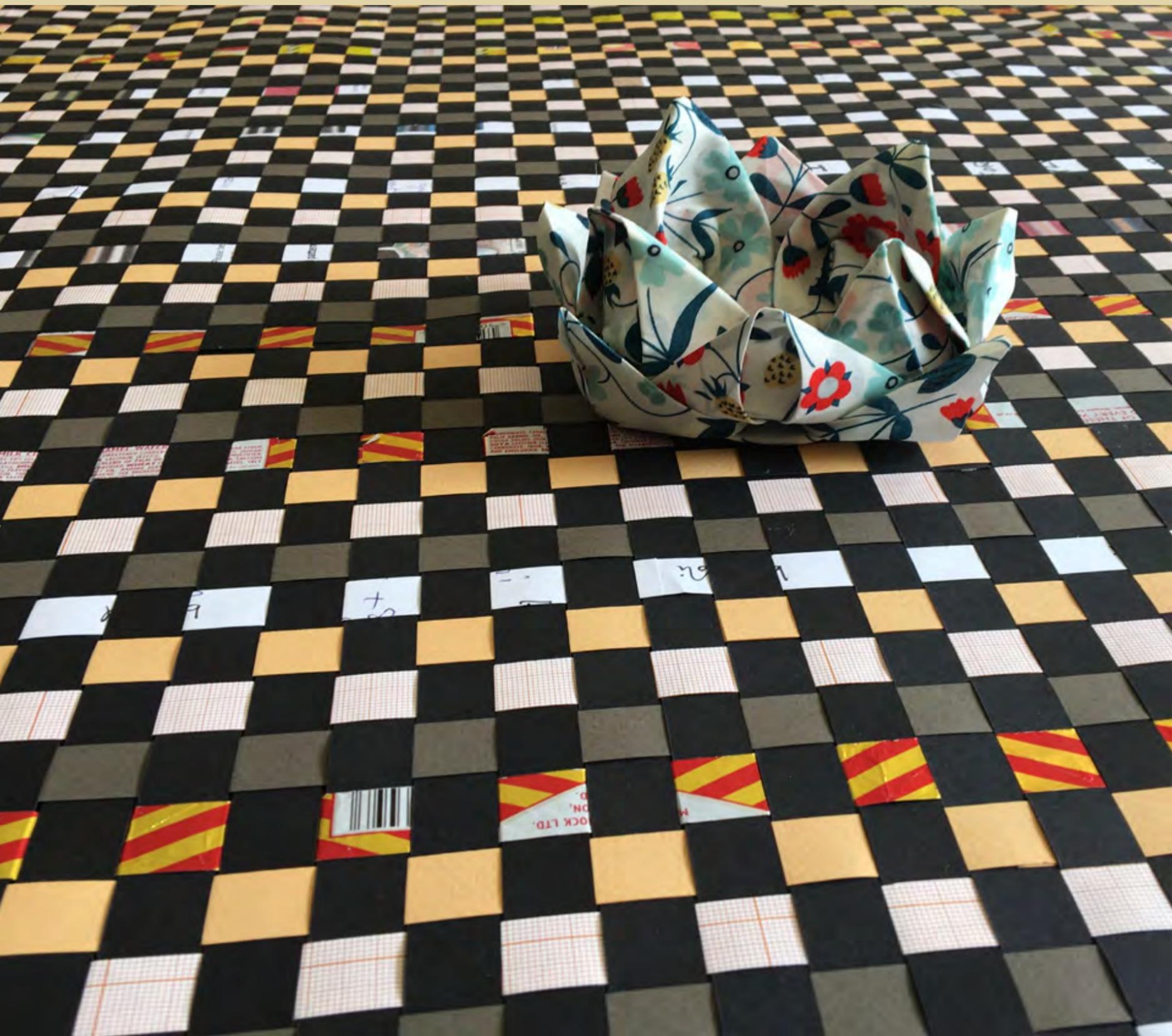
Hearing - Seeing

The world is full of sounds, sounds generated by nature and sounds composed by authors, sounds we notice and those we ignore. But the perception of these is not identical, what one hears is not necessarily the same as what's heard by another.

In my practice and research I am interested in the ways we listen to sound: as part of the investigation of place, in the sonic structures of landscapes (both real and imagined), through mapping memory, and in perceptual experiences. My work questions relationships between auditory and visual awareness, exploring different ways of listening and considering how sound can be experienced through non-audio media and how images can be evoked by noise.

Psychoacoustics is central to how we understand our listening experiences. It explains how our auditory system identifies and then chooses what we listen to and how we perceive sounds. Through listening, we access recognizable, familiar or remembered noises, which we then use to assess our auditory perceptions. In these moments, we can compose an environmental landscape we can 'see' without the need to physically be there - potentially accessing a transcendent state of consciousness.

Susan Hamston



© Omniscient Om (detail) (2021)

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Susan Hamston

My assemblages result from the entanglement of an art practice with the domestic space.

In the home we inhabit a constellation of objects. The interchangeability of these objects – from the functional to the non-functional – reveals the potentially mercurial quality and the versatility of everyday things. When combined with other materials, what emerges are sculptures of a human scale that aim to maintain the intimacy of the domestic space.

There are other aspects of daily life which my practice seeks to reflect. The everyday imposes its monotony, and repetition has always been a feature of domestic life. However, repetitiveness can open a space that facilitates an escape into fantasy as a means of coping with the mundane.

These themes, materials, and processes of both the domestic and an art practice create a kind of exquisite corpse of Deleuzian folds. When making assemblages these ideas can be expressed with an almost infinite possibility of arrangements without beginning or end, so reflecting the business of living.

Deborah Last



From Hartland Point (2021)

'Meldon Quarry' from the daily painting series was long-listed for the Jackson's Painting Prize 2021.

With thanks to those people who have sometimes kept me company out in the landscape and cheered me on:
Pete Last, Kathryn Timms, Zoe Day

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**Drawing and Painting with
Debs Last**

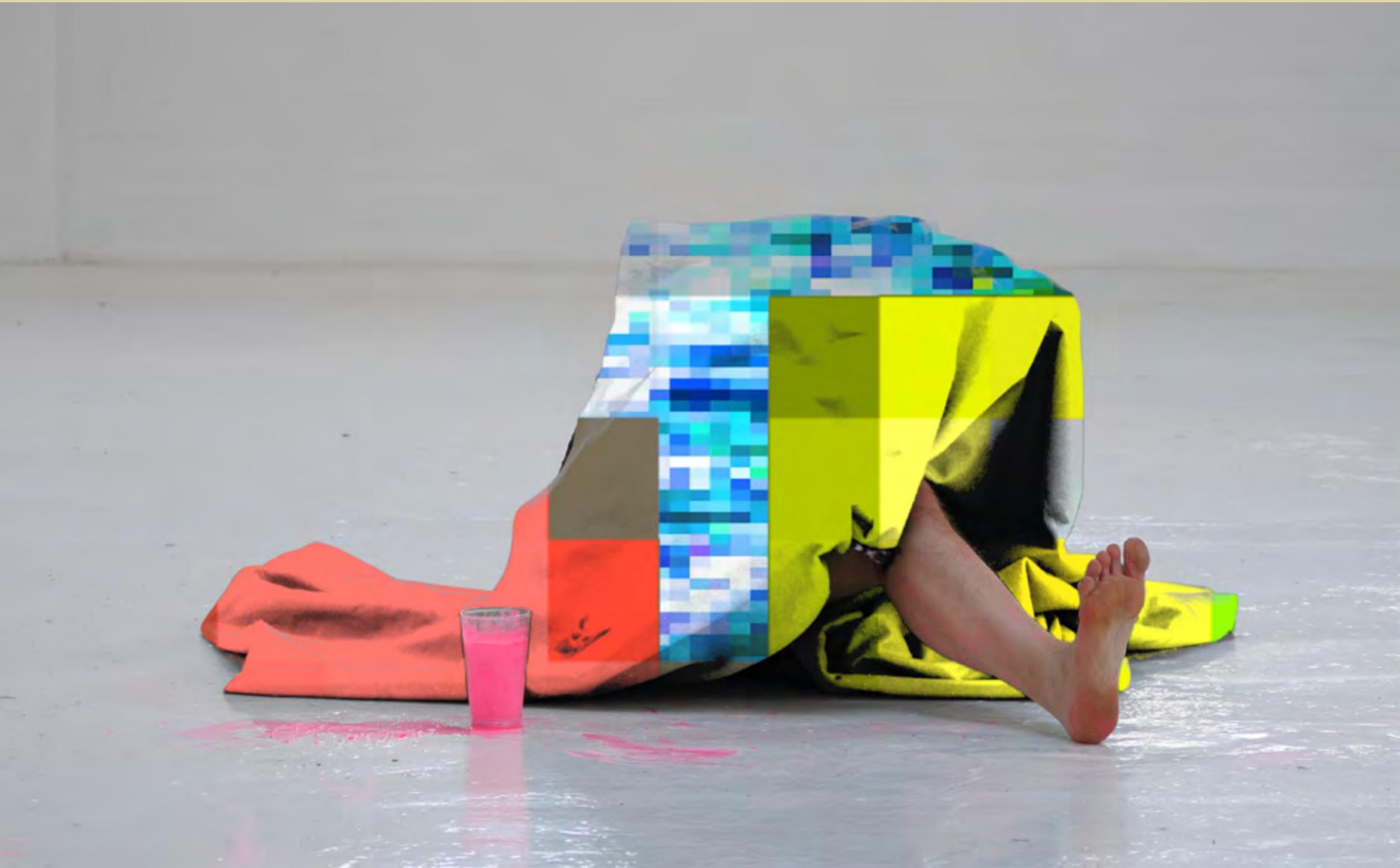
Deborah Last

Over the last year I have used en plein air painting as a tool to keep me practicing as an artist, as a way to ground me. Within my studio I have processed what the pandemic has meant to me as a mother. It has separated me from my children and family, it has made this beautiful location in which I live a curse for being so far away from them as well as a blessing for being so beautiful. In recent months, I have been processing this from drawings done of the children over the internet and in response to how we communicate through Messenger and Zoom.

These ongoing works have been held in place by the rhythm of the daily landscape paintings. These are the landscapes and location that kept me focused. I have headed out through storms and rain, in cold and sunshine to paint. At times we have had to stay close to home, so I painted there and then when able to, I headed out further afield to paint Dartmoor, Exmoor and the Devon and Cornish coastland. These painting are quickly done, looking for light and structure. Finding the moment, inhabiting it and then expressing it.

During the MA, I spent three years taking my practice apart. What has emerged is an assurance about my dual-threaded practice that ebbs and flows between observation and storytelling.

Gary Marshall-Stevens



still from Who proclaims it is all a pack of cards and that the emperor is naked? (2020)

My eternal gratitude to the Von Trap family.

Thankyou to KARST for the space.

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Gary Marshall-Stevens

Objects, moving image, audio, physical interventions - the debris of an attempt.

Grounded in a sculptural tradition of the physical encounter, the recent body bears the marks of attempted passage through space - taking place - in and for the moment.

'Common sense' narratives concerning identity and othering are negotiated as spaces by a body regarded as a precarious object. Awkward humour is used to interrupt, to encourage those narratives to collapse in upon themselves.

Laced with problematic cultural references these crude attempts to stay sane manifest as challenges to the world. Akin to a prank, each is an exploration of a limit, courting probable failure with a poor dad-joke punchline that may never come.

Donna Mitchell



Studio Conversations (2021)

Acknowledgements:
David Handford
Chelston Workshops Torquay
Jerry Sowell (The Southwest Sofa Co)

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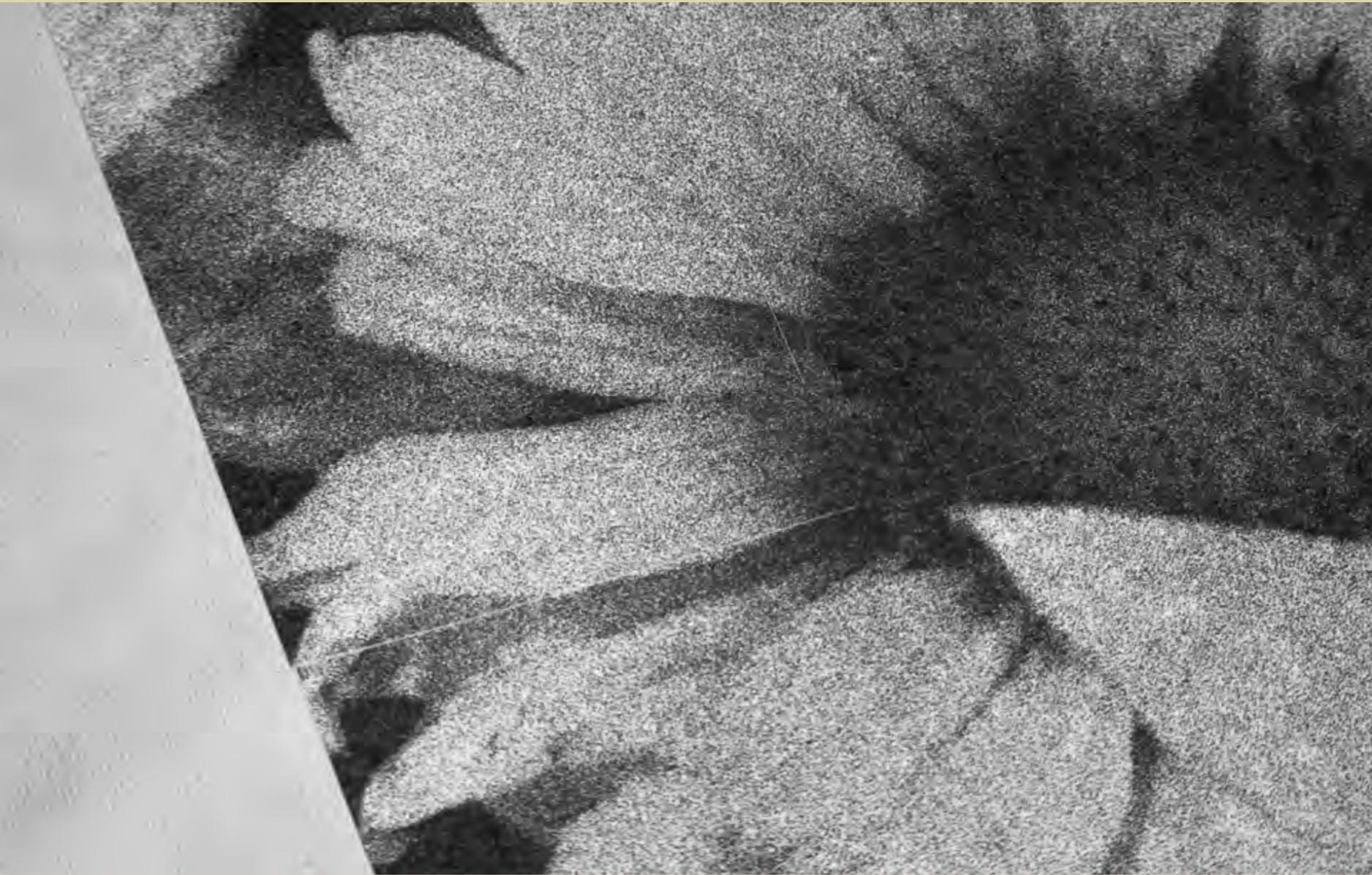
Donna Mitchell

Recently I've taken to cycling without my glasses. I'm only mildly short sighted so there's little immediate danger. I've found it allows my brain to invent the details my eyes miss. Travelling at some speed through the landscape both reduces and alters the information I process. I find catching a glimpse can be a powerful thing.

I'm not quite at the point where I'm having conversations with dustbins but I see and encourage anthropomorphic qualities in detritus. I am drawn to the beauty in discarded and abandoned objects in the world, for me they have a lure of uncertainty and magic about them, they ask to be noticed. As a result of exposure to the weather, named objects slowly become the unnamed, altering as time passes.

Sculpture on the other hand has a certain fakery and stillness about it which I find intriguing. It presents an unreal moment frozen in time - an attempt to keep a gesture in check. There is always a possibility however that it could begin to slide. It's trying to catch that moment between beginning and end that is the challenge.

Brad North



Aurora in the Whitewaters (2021)

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Brad North

Autobiographical making embodies experiences, translated through autographic marks and images. Working becomes a process of understanding trauma and grief.

Through art practice theoretical manifestations of experience are explored. Research into phenomenology, philosophy and psychoanalysis pinpoints how thoughts are immediately embodied and, through the making process, manifest as lived experience.

Departures from the conscious and working at the speed of thought, generate illegible marks that bridge barriers between public and private realms. Poetry and musical influences operate as a gateway into the making process. Through palimpsest, surfaces contain traces of previous thoughts, manifesting as cognitive and emotive triggers

Antonina Szram



from *Ultrasounding* (2021)

Thanks to:
Carla Frida
(voice and performance)

Lidia Cankova
(textile and costume poetry)

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Antonina Szram

Uncanny cohabitation of transit spaces, ports of entry is explored where im/migrant deportation overlaps with the arrival/departure of travelers, where Souls nest on trees before returning to a womb. The entwined travels are informed by Slavic mythology, Orthodox iconography, and divergences of ecology such as large-scale deforestation and suburban lawns.

The quality of transparency of glass, one of the most important avenues to truth about the natural world, is part of the method and matter of this investigation. Glass lenses are used including a microscope, binoculars and a handblown bullseye sheet; responding to the wind, the trees and the sunbeam; something is sensed on this threshold.

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