

William Lunn, 'Confined: An Experiment in Total Curating', NEST Gallery, November 2012

one **NEST** stand #11

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donderdag 22 november 2012, 20.00 uur

Uitnodiging expositie
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Will Lunn, de jongste galerist van Londen, experimenteert met het begrip 'total curating'. Foto's, schilderijen, tekeningen, beelden, installaties, architectonische ingrepen en films zullen onder begeleiding van licht en muziek ingezet worden tijdens een multizintuigelijke zoektocht naar de claustrofobische staat van zijn.

Confined_
An experiment in 'Total Curating'

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Met dank aan:
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RIZIA VAN KRALINGEN

Atmos Studios, Blue Curry, Adam Dix, Darren Harvey-Regan, Russell Hill, Ross Jones, Kite & Laslett, Andre Kruysen, Mogwai, Mikey Please, Sintta Tantra, Jan Maarten Voskuil

An initial experiment in 'Total Curating', *Confined* attempts to create a truly immersive, multi-sensory, multi-media experience for the viewer while exploring a single, conceptual focus.

In museums today we frequently encounter evocations of the past that have set a partial precedent for this methodology. In a display exploring the Black Death we are offered historic objects, sculptural reconstructions, photographs of historic remains, videos and interactive displays, sound and even the smells, tastes and clothing from the time to try on. Every sense is engaged in response to the chosen subject. This is inevitably didactic and diluted by the specific remits and agendas of the museum. From another perspective installation artists have also developed works that immerse us in their chosen subject through a wide selection of media. To lesser and greater degrees, curators have successfully created art exhibitions that engage with senses beyond the purely visual, through a range of media, and in response to an exploration of a single concept. However, on the rare yet often successful occasions when this experience is encountered within the context of contemporary, art it is often an incidental outcome of a chosen subject rather than part of the curatorial agenda.

The aim in proposing 'Total Curating' is to put a name and an expressed methodology to something that has been partially identified in the above forms. It is conceived of as a framework for realising group exhibitions that brings together a broad range of creative outputs, that engage actively with as many relevant senses as possible, in an exploration of a single chosen subject. In 'Total Curating' the concept is primary. All other concerns whether commercial or institutional are secondary.

An exhibition governed by this methodology may include; Short Film, Video Art, Sound Art, Visual Art and Architecture as well as music, tastes, smells and tactile surfaces. The proposal of this methodology is therefore also an examination of where it is necessary to breakdown elitist boundaries created by the concept of 'disciplines' that separate creative outputs into 'Art' and 'Non Art'.

The driving force behind this proposed form of curatorial conduct is the absolute importance of and commitment to a full exploration of the chosen concept. As such if an original work is not available, but a suitable facsimile is able to convey the work's contribution to the concept, then it absolutely should be included. The viewers immersive experience in the exploration of the concept comes before any other concern.

In *Confined*, photography, painting, drawing, print, sculpture, installation, architecture, film, light and music will engage the viewers senses in an exploration of the concept 'claustrophobia'. This has been chosen as the subject for this initial experiment since it is an universally acknowledged condition.

Claustrophobia can be understood in many ways. Beyond the traditional notion of physical constraints, we can feel trapped by time, mortality, culture, religion, nostalgia, or by domestic and social situations. In an ever more densely populated world, shrunk every day by technological advances, claustrophobia has a very real relevance to our time.

Visitors will be immediately confronted by a large installation that will choreograph their journey into the gallery, subtly interrupting their means of access. The spatial intervention, conceived and built by Alex Haw from the art/architecture/design collective *atmos*, questions our relationship to movement and ergonomics - and our assumptions about spatial rights and freedoms. Once inside viewers will find an installation by Sinta Tantra in the room to their left - an overwhelming site specific work that engages with every surface in a myriad of shapes and colours. The room is not restrictive yet the work is entrapping and assaults the senses problematising the notion that a physical experience of claustrophobia relates only to confirmed spaces. In a second room *'Mikey Please'* Bafta winning animated short film will draw viewers into a consideration of our confinement in time and mortality, through a work made entirely with cut foam and light.

In the main space Andre Kruysen will alter the internal fabric of the gallery to encroach on our space and change our experience with a quasi-architectural installation, Bahamian artist Blue Curry will present a set of curiously altered conch shells that question the cultural boundaries and associations that confine objects and people alike, and artist / architect duo Kite and Laslett will present 'Enclosure' with music by Mogwai - a sound and light installation that creates a sense of physical boundaries via the oral and visual senses. Glaswegian musicians Mogwai are well known for creating incredible 'walls of sound' but also for tapping into emotional experiences such as the passing of time or nostalgia, with music that contains no discernible vocals. In one of two temporary corridors, Darren Harvey-Regan's photographic installation '3:16' will hang over the viewer subverting the classic ideal of unending love into one of personal and social repression. The second of these two corridors will be blocked by a sculptural painting by Jan Maarten Voskuil, the geometric abstract appearing to force itself against the two walls in an effort to keep them apart, its stretcher and canvas curving to touch the two enclosing surfaces. The picture plane will only be discernible in a side view of the shape and colour reflected onto the facing wall, altering completely the experience of the painting and freeing the canvas from the constraints of the geometric abstract painting tradition by physically confining it.

Further into the exhibition, Adam Dix' painting attempts to convey the complex emotional experience of various forms of claustrophobia, and in doing so highlights the extent to which feelings of claustrophobia can be attributed to mental rather than physical states. In contrast, Ross Jones will break from his usual practice to experiment with the possibility of realising his drawn subjects in sculptural form. The surfaces of the sculpture however will adhere to his ongoing program of intricate monochromatic detail; paired back to a graphic simplicity, in order to stand as an icon for a complex political issue. In this case he engages with the idea of confinement in relation to illegal immigrants; the confined space of the shipping containers which so often conceal stow aways, stands as a metaphor for the inescapable situations that force people into migration via such extreme means. Finally, a facsimile of Francis Bacon's 'Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Popevny Innocent X' (1953), will hang alongside, 'Airwick', by Russell Hill.

The work by Bacon is relevant not only because of the physical 'boxing in' of the figure or the emotional response depicted, but because of the ideas of religious oppression and inescapable personal anguish it conveys. Furthermore there is a personal link to Bacon, since during his formative years the artist was frequently locked in a cupboard by his nanny and would remain there for hours, screaming. Interestingly "That cupboard," he later said, "was the making of me" and as an artist he preferred to work in tiny, cramped conditions. The original work was of course impossible to display for this exhibition but the facsimile amply conveys those elements of the original that are relevant to the exhibition concept.

In Russell Hill's 'Airwick' installation, a regimented row of customised automatic air freshener machines will visually assault the viewer. We are placed in front of a 'firing squad' of exposed chrome mechanics, that release fragrance with a hiss every few seconds. The overpowering smell is inescapable, and evocative of other experiences; the morning train filled to the brim, the combined warmth increasing the smell of sweat, perfume and deodorant to a level that is as oppressive as the physical restrictions in that overcrowded space. In recent experiments the artist has begun to work with the 'National Geographic' Air Wick range, adding a curious dimension to the sense of entrapment by using fragrances that are supposedly evocative of vast open landscapes such as the Nevada Desert.

Will Lunn, Curator