

DISPLACEMENT ACTIVITIES

EXHIBITION OPENS ON JUNE 2 AND CONTINUES TO JUNE 25

- + Artist discussion pre-exhibition opening :: Thursday June 2, 5pm-6pm
 - + GREAT EXPECTATIONS // Runway Magazine Membership Drive :: Saturday June 4, 1pm-4pm
 - + Indigenous Women in the Arts Panel for VIVID SYDNEY :: Saturday June 18, 1-3pm
 - + The Leftovers Catalogue Launch and Art Crit :: Saturday June 25, 1-3pm
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Steven Grainger's work addresses the nature of value, fear, personal responsibility and institutional culpability. In his first international solo exhibition, Grainger uses a legal document, historical and mythological symbols and his own body as the subject and material of his art.

Central to the exhibition is the latest in Grainger's series of Will-pieces that has been ongoing since 2011 (whereby the legal document of a will-and-testament is developed as a form of artistic object and process). Each will bequeaths the artist's entire legal estate to a named beneficiary or group of beneficiaries. The wills are legally-binding only for a specified time (usually for the duration of the project or exhibition in which they are shown).

During the exhibition at Verge, Sian McIntyre - the Director of the Gallery - has been named as Grainger's sole legal heir. A document allowing her to claim the artist's estate (in the event of his death) will be shown alongside a series of sculptures and a video exploring metaphors of artistic process, temporality and existential knowledge.

Alongside the will, the exhibition engages with a number of mythological symbols of the attempt to comprehend mortality. The Golden Apple (associated with the Greek myth of 'The Judgement of Paris', the Nordic figure of the Goddess of Youth, and the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden) is juxtaposed with the 'ticking time-bomb' of cartoons and the gesturing human figure of allegorical tradition.

This legacy of symbols could be perceived as an equivalent form of cultural 'inheritance' to the economic legacy prescribed in a will. Grainger is particularly concerned with how these images might be utilised to explore the power relations that sustain artistic and cultural practice and the instability and changing social status of a queer subjectivity in the contemporary world.

The artist sees these factors as being related via the commodification of life (and death) - our social and legal tradition of 'inheritance'. The act of bequeathing his legacy to the commissioning curator of the exhibition is intended to give poetic expression to these ideas.

The artist is concerned with how we negotiate value in a world where both creative and sexual identity are defined (and perhaps 'owned') by historic institutions and language. However this question, rather than being expressed solely in words, is conveyed via a sculptural and photographic language that is both protean and expansive - a method of capturing and recapturing space and air, gravity, form and light. The rebellious curiosity that led Eve to bite the fruit of knowledge thus becomes equivalent to the transformative (abstract) curiosity that drives artistic practice.

VERGE GALLERY



Works listed from left wall at entrance to gallery ::

Equity Release; The Joy of Energy, Oil stick and printed text on paper. 81x30x65mm, 2016.

Pow-Pow (Silence and Fear), Digital inkjet print. 80x2430mm, 2016.

Egalite devant la mort, Aluminium, wood, wax, paper, projector. 380x1550x1775mm, 2016.

Improvised Explosive Device (Apple), Video; 1.10 (looped), aluminium, box monitor. 68x51x99, 2016.

From Where We Left Off, Steel, brass, wood, wax, paint. 1130x1210x2260mm, 2016.

Thanks to Siân McIntyre, Lavina Harte, Laurence Figgis and staff and volunteers at Verge Gallery.

This exhibition has been supported by Creative Scotland.



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

VERGE GALLERY



Objet d' Art

I come to myself
in a ditch,
glass raining down
through a hole in the lid
of the see-through box
they put me in
a decade ago.

I'm nearly upended,
angled downwards, my
head at the base
of the tree where
I crashed.

The pallbearers,
skidding down
the embankment
in pursuit of me,
dislodging soil,
as they hurry
to inspect their
damaged goods,
pause in terror
when they hear
me cough.

And here he is -
the underwriter
of all the world,
the corpse-kisser
of the ages.

And he is smiling
as he looks down
at me.

The pallbearers are
not used to
my staring back,
and their eyes
are full of fear.
But *he* is smiling.

There is a stain
on my shoulder,
a gluey substance,
full of acidic globules,
running down from

the corner of my mouth.

At first
I think my brains
are leaking down
over my shoulder
through a wound
in my head.

The mess
on the cloth
is not blood or gore,

but a sticky solution
of fruit,
part-dissolved
in stomach acid,
the last remnants
of the apple
I bit into,
all those
years ago.

Next to me,
on the grass,
is a dried up stalk
- another bit of
the apple I ate.

The end of the stalk
glows like a lit-fuse.
I hold my fingers
to that restless jerking
taper of gold,

while the hands of the
pallbearers snap
at the edges of
my see-through coffin,
and *he* helps me out.

I stumble
through the
dusty membrane
(that was never
quite transparent)
and onto the flaking soil

as bits of broken glass

flutter down
my damp hair.

And he says,
you are with me.

*You are so
lucky to be alive,*
he says

and kisses me
frantically,

grinding the bits of
partially-dissolved
fruit and the
bits of broken glass
into my face
with his kiss.

*You are alive, and
you are beautiful,*
says he.

And I say
am I?

And he says
-oh you speak?

And tears come
into his eyes,
and his eyes say,
you belong to me.

But all I can think,
as I wipe the dead fruit
(and his kiss)
from my mouth,

is I used to be
dead and amazing,
I used to be
silent and free.

