

ELIZABETH PRICE

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Artangel

SLOW DANS

SLOW DANS is a cycle of three new, multi-channel video works by Elizabeth Price – individually titled KOHL, FELT TIP and THE TEACHERS – that explore the relationship between the body, writing and collective memory.

Each work features a different collection of artefacts, all drawn from the same historical period in the late 20th century: between 1965 and 1995. None of these artefacts are celebrated, all are of minor or overlooked status. Yet they offer distinctive evidence of the period's profound social and economic change.

In SLOW DANS we see these artefacts altered. They are forensically magnified by projection, and digitally inverted, negated, desaturated, dissected and multiplied. This candid transformation is indicative of Price's approach to archival materials. She uses digital processes to 'turn' them to express something repressed, supplementary or other to their own social history, or to stand proxy for experiences which have no adequate historic record.

Storytelling runs through SLOW DANS. One story is written up on the screens during each episode of the cycle – scrolling over the artefacts, accompanied by the percussive sounds of typing, spoken and sung by a chorus of four synthetic voices. These stories use genres of ghost and science-fiction as well as grotesque satire. And whilst the events they describe may be fantastical, the spaces and places figuratively created are more familiar.

The physical layout of the installation expands on this. The projectors are oriented vertically, so they can stand-in for mine shafts and ink-wells and the human throat at various points, as well as the format of a book page. They are organised at two different heights, to express spaces below and above ground, the relation between hard-drive and desktop, the interconnections of our geological past and technological present, and to explore social and economic hierarchies of labour.

FOOT NOTES

Elizabeth Price has created a new series of short single-screen video works called FOOT NOTES that mine some of the social, cultural and technical histories in SLOW DANS. The videos cover a range of subjects including the stiletto heel, the academic robe, the origin of coal and the miners' disease known as 'black lung'.

Created by Price whilst self-isolating during lockdown, the videos use ad-hoc props and sets built by hand and combine footage created in total darkness using infra-red light with sound and image debris scavenged from the internet. During the course of the exhibition, FOOT NOTES can be viewed exclusively on Artangel's website.

EVENTS

A programme of events inspired by SLOW DANS will take place online throughout the course of the exhibition. Contributors include writers, poets, musicians and artists – including Jay Bernard, Margarita Gluzberg, Hannah Catherine Jones, Carol Morley, Katrina Palmer – invited to interpret and speak on the themes present in the work, and an introduction to SLOW DANS by Elizabeth Price.

The programme will be hosted on the Artangel's website and released in succession, available to watch (almost) every Tuesday at 6:30pm.

PUBLICATION

The first major publication on Elizabeth Price's work includes sequences of stills and transcripts from KOHL, FELT TIP and THE TEACHERS; a selection of research materials compiled by Elizabeth Price; a glossary by Mary Griffiths and essays by Katrina Palmer, Pavel Pys and Adrian Rifkin. Special exhibition price £15.

FIND OUT MORE

To find out more about SLOW DANS, please visit our website artangel.org.uk/slow-dans

Share your thoughts with us using #SlowDans and visit our website to fill in our survey.

To be the first to hear about new Artangel projects like this sign up to our mailing list at artangel.org.uk/newsletter

ARTANGEL

Artangel produces and presents extraordinary art in unexpected places across London, the UK, and beyond. For over thirty years, Artangel has generated some of the most widely discussed art of recent times, including prominent large-scale projects with artists who have become household names in the UK, including the likes of Jeremy Deller, PJ Harvey, Roger Hiorns, Michael Landy, and Rachel Whiteread.

Recent Artangel projects include Taryn Simon's *An Occupation of Loss*, Evan Roth's *Red Lines*, Heiner Goebbels' *Everything that happened and would happen*, Jonathan Glazer's short film *STRASBOURG 1518* made for the BBC and Steve McQueen's *Year 3*, in collaboration with Tate Britain and A New Direction.

Appearing anywhere from empty prisons to underground vaults, prime time TV to the sky at night, Artangel produces art that takes on a multitude of forms and appears in different places to offer a variety of interactions to a curious public.

WITH THANKS TO

SLOW DANS is a collaboration between Artangel, Film and Video Umbrella, Glasgow Life, Nottingham Contemporary, the Whitworth, The University of Manchester, and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and is part of The Artangel Collection. The SLOW DANS publication is supported by Eileen Cohen. Presented in London through the generosity of Peabody.

The Artangel Collection is an initiative to bring outstanding film and video works, commissioned and produced by Artangel, to galleries and museums across the UK. It has been developed in partnership with Tate, is generously supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and The Foyle Foundation and uses public funding from Arts Council England.

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the Whitworth

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KOHL

KOHL features the archive of Albert Walker, a former miner, who systematically photographed UK mine-heads between 1970 and 1990. None of these structures now exist, and Walker's photographs constitute the most comprehensive record of British coal-mine architecture during the late 20th Century.

When these images appear in KOHL, they are presented upside down and in negative to denote the erasure of these industrial landmarks. They also gesture to what remains. Immediately below these sites, where distribution warehouses, retail centres and university buildings now stand, a mine shaft still descends to a vast, capillary network of tunnels, now flooded with groundwater.

In KOHL this knowledge is the basis for a short ghost story, in which the tidal water running through these tunnels becomes an expressive medium, carrying sound from one mine to another. It also appears as an inky discharge in the foundations of new buildings. This spectral emission echoes the fatal symptom of miner's lung disease, known as 'inky spit'.

The story is conveyed by four narrators via type-on text. Each 'voice' appears within a different projection and is announced with a different keyboard sound. The type is black, visible only against a colour fade that rises and falls as if tidally. The only other visible expression of the narrators is a pair of feet, steeped in black liquid, that slow dance between the screens connecting one coal mine image to another.

FELT TIP

In FELT TIP, a collection of men's neckties is employed as a visual prop to explore the changing demographics of the office work-force through the 1970s and 80s. It is also used as a means to connect this social change to interrelated histories of writing, weaving and data storage.

Woven ties and computer data storage share a technical history – they both descend from the Jacquard loom. Many of the ties presented in FELT TIP made in the UK between 1970 and 1986 (collected by Price between 1998 and 2018) appear to make the family relationship explicit. They feature imagery and patterning that echo visual aspects of emerging computer technologies. In some of these ties motifs that look like memory chips sit in the place usually reserved for the crests and insignia that silently indicate social class.

Does this replacement proclaim a new, more accessible basis for executive authority rooted in technology? Not entirely, the chorus of four synthetic voices declare. They observe that the tie genders the power to write the record, but not simply through phallic symbolism. It also resembles the ink-pen nib, the traditional instrument of executive power.

So, the narrators of FELT TIP imagine a different pen and another body in the writing. Their tale turns on a series of visual puns and word-plays. They use slang, innuendo, homonym, synonym and rhyme. They draw upon etymology and word root (the digit in the digital and the secret of the secretary) to describe a near-future corporate realm where they are employed to store documents in their own DNA. In the course of this, they touch upon the technical history of data storage, a history of the man's necktie, and the fraught class and gender politics of office life.

THE TEACHERS

The visual imagery of THE TEACHERS is drawn from photography of women's formal wear featured in UK fashion magazines during the period 1969–1995. Originally, these photographs show young female models demonstrating the luxury of full length garments, designed for wealthy women to wear at formal or ceremonial occasions. The dresses are elaborate and the models' poses are never naturalistic. They use exaggerated gestures to demonstrate – for example – the drape of a generous sleeve, the sheen of a sequined skirt.

Removed from the context of the fashion magazine, these disembodied gestures acquire different expressive powers, and the dresses become the costume for other roles. In the parallel reality of THE TEACHERS they mimic the long robes traditionally worn by men for formal ceremonies in academia, the church and the law.

A chorus of four narrators describe how a contagion of silence has spread through these groups. Those afflicted decline to speak or write but have their own absurd ceremonies. In these they make ambiguous oral sounds and perform exaggerated gestures, variously comic, dolorous and profane.

A relationship between the intimacy of a physical body and the interior of a book is long established. Indeed, a book's spine is named for the actual back bone it displaced in early bookbinding techniques using animal pelts. As they mimic the opening and closing of a book, THE TEACHERS rebuke newly attenuated forms of executive work, with their own grave carnality.

ELIZABETH PRICE

Elizabeth Price was born in Bradford in 1966 and lives and works in London. Often beginning with research into archives and museum collections, Price creates short videos that explore the social and political histories of artefacts, architectures, and documents.

Editing plays a key role in Price's practice, and her arresting works are widely regarded for the interplay of the visual and aural – as witnessed in the rapid succession of imagery combined with layered soundtracks. During this process, archival footage is brought into conversation with digitally rendered imagery, whilst the narrative moves between historical facts and strange fiction.

Pop music and its technologies are featured often in Price's work and her soundtracks include percussion and songs. This interest in pop is long-standing as Price was a founding member and songwriter for the 80's indie band Talulah Gosh.

In 2012, she was awarded the Turner Prize for her video installation *THE WOOLWORTHS CHOIR OF 1979*. In 2013, she won the Contemporary Art Society Annual Award with the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology. Price studied at the Royal College of Art, London, and the University of Leeds.

She has exhibited in group exhibitions internationally, and has had solo exhibitions at Tate Britain, UK; Chicago Institute of Art, USA; Julia Stoschek Foundation, Düsseldorf; The Baltic, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, USA; Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, UK, and The Whitworth, Manchester, UK. Throughout her career, Price has continued to work in academia, and is presently Professor of Film and Photography in the School of Art, Kingston University, UK.