

TRANSMISSION



FINE ART LECTURE SERIES

SEMESTER I

2020

TUESDAYS 4.30 to 6.00 P.M.



13 OCTOBER

Host: Michelle Atherton ଓ Speaker: Ashley Holmes ଓ Respondent: Sharon Kivland

20 OCTOBER

Host: Rose Butler ଓ Speaker: Yuen Fong Ling ଓ Respondent: Toni Buckby

27 OCTOBER

Host: Yuen Fong Ling ଓ Speaker: Hester Reeve ଓ Respondent: Hestia Peppé

10 NOVEMBER

Host: Rose Butler ଓ Speaker: Sarah Smizz ଓ Respondent: Sharon Kivland

17 NOVEMBER

Host: Rose Butler ଓ Speaker: Michelle Atherton ଓ Respondent: Becky Shaw

24 NOVEMBER

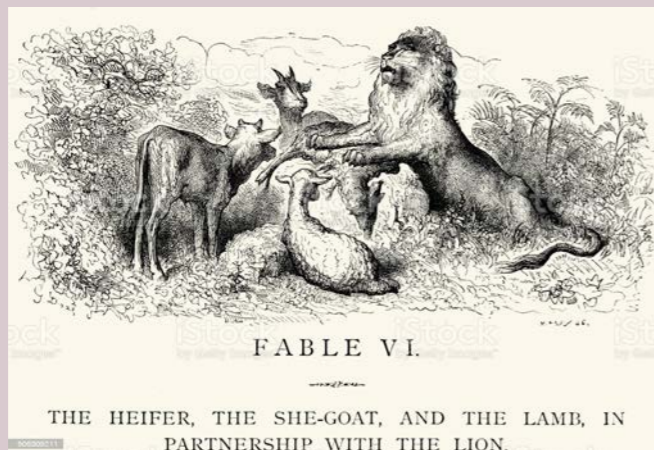
Host: Michelle Atherton ଓ Speaker: Sharon Kivland ଓ Respondent: Emma Bolland

TRANSMISSION

FINE ART LECTURE PROGRAMME

2020

Semester 1



Transmission is the passing of information *via* a channel, and this is the intention of the Transmission project, started in 2001. We enquire about the aesthetic and discursive forms required by practices in the field of contemporary art and theory that address sociality and subjectivity. Over a year ago we decided to work with the theme of transmission for 2020 to 2021 that is not without terrible irony now, when the transmission of COVID-19 has killed half a million people, though the true death toll and number of cases is believed to be higher. This is a virus that has laid bare our interconnections, not only among people but also between species and the environment. It has highlighted and significantly amplified the inequalities that are etched into our current way of living.

We will explore what transmission might mean through networks of mutual care and conversation, the sharing of our histories (and their construction and representation), how we may pass something on to another without harm, as accomplices, in dialogue. Now is the time to come together, to consider what contribution works and acts of art might make to undoing, unsettling, producing different forms; what we might pass on to each other and what we might learn from those around us, from our cultural contexts of stories and symbols. The philosopher and novelist, Sylvia Wynter, drawing on Aimé Césaire, writes:

Human beings are magical. Bios and Logos. Words made flesh, muscle and bone animated by hope and desire, belief materialised in deeds, deeds which crystallise our actualities [...]

Over the semester in six events, six speakers will discuss their practice in relation to transmission, each presenting in different ways, followed by a respondent who will take up particular matters of transmission. Each event will have a host, performing an introduction to transmission. The discussion will open to include anyone who wishes to speak.



BIOGRAPHIES

MICHELLE ATHERTON researches particular moments conditions in collective histories. Her remix aesthetic, incorporating sound, image, text, and the lighting effects, produces fragmented narratives. Her images are hooks to explore slippery perceptions of the world, looking again at what sees beyond question, but where inherent instability opens into other questions of material states, refusals, politics, and new imaginaries. She is currently working on a live performance of *The Repository of Irrational Gestures* for the Freud Museum, London 2021.

EMMA BOLLAND is an Associate Lecturer in Fine Art and is completing a Ph.D. in the Art and Design Research Centre, supervised by Sharon Kivland. Their current practice encompasses experimental writing, performance, drawing, and moving image, exploring an expanded understanding of translation between languages and language codes, and between modes of writing, reading, and speaking. They are a co-editor at Gordian projects, a small press operating at the intersections of artists' books, literature, and archive, working with a range of artists and writers. Recent publications and articles include *Over, In, and Under* (monograph, Dostoyevsky Wannabe, 2019) and 'Fictions: Disrupting an Orthodox Real', co-authored with Elizabeth Chakrabarty, in *Imagined Spaces* (eds Gail Low and Kirsty Young, Dundee: Voyages Out, 2020).

TONI BUCKBY works with traditional textiles, experimental digital technologies, and acts of collective making to question skilled practice, the value of labour, the visibility of authorship, and the production and accessibility of knowledge. She has participated in residencies, exhibitions, and festivals including Digital Media Labs (2015), Sonic Pattern Residency (2015), AlgoMech Festival (2016/2017/2019), No Bounds Festival (2017), *Making Ways* (2019), and Leeds International Festival (2019). She is currently installing a large scale electronic textile work, made in collaboration with local volunteers, at the Derby Silk Mill Museum of Making for its reopening in spring 2021, and undertaking a Ph.D. with Sheffield Hallam University and the Victoria & Albert Museum, investigating how fine art practice and digital technologies may be used to reconstruct, interpret, and present fragile and inaccessible Elizabethan embroideries.

ROSE BUTLER is an artist, researcher, and senior lecturer in Fine Art. She uses adapted technology and custom-built software alongside early cameras and analogue technique to look at what we can and cannot see. She makes interactive installations, single and multi-screen videos, and large-scale photographs. New work based on the buffer zone between North and South Cyprus will be shown in 2021.

ASHLEY HOLMES is an interdisciplinary artist working in installation, sound, video, radio broadcasts, and performance. His current research is centred around traditions of Black musical practices and archival processes to examine concepts of access, property, citizenship, and forms of storytelling in the global media landscape. He organises Open Deck, a series of gatherings giving space to collectively listen, discuss, and document relationships to music and oral histories. He also hosts *Tough Matter*, a monthly show on NTS Radio. Recent exhibitions include A Free Moment, curated by Christina Gigliotti at Futura Centre for Contemporary Art, Prague, CZ (2020) and Survey, group exhibition supported by Jerwood Visual Arts touring to G39, Cardiff; The Bluecoat, Liverpool; BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (2019).

SHARON KIVLAND is an artist, writer, editor, and publisher, the latter under the imprint MA BIBLIOTHÈQUE. She has also been called a poet, much to her surprise Her work considers what is put at stake by art, politics, and psychoanalysis. She is working on the natural form, while editing the letters and other material sent to her by the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan during the course of their turbulent love affair. Her novel *Abécédaire* will be published by Moist in 2022.

YUEN FONG LING is an artist and Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Sheffield Hallam University. Currently based at Bloc Studio, Ling is recipient of Site Gallery's Platform 2018-20 artist development programme; part of the 'Making Our Way' strategic planning for the visual arts led by Sheffield Culture Consortium, and recently appointed a commissioner for the Race Equality Commission supported by Sheffield City Council focussing on decolonising street names, statues, and monuments in Sheffield. Ling's recent project *Towards Memorial* (2018-ongoing) explores the making, gifting, and wearing of sandals once designed and made by gay socialist activist writer Edward Carpenter (1844-1929) as an alternative form of public memorial-making, and will be exhibited at Bury Art Museum and Sculpture Centre, Frelands Foundation Gallery, London, and Catalyst Arts, Belfast, in 2021.

HESTIA PEPPÉ is committed to confounding conventional practices of linearity. She reframes drawing, writing, tracing, coding, and spinning across disciplines in relation to material histories, narratives and practices of reading, divination, diagnosis, and other stochastic technologies such as machine learning via neural networks. Working as an artist, writer, educator, and researcher, she figures reading expansively, responsively, and responsibly as a multi-modal networked practice of devotional reciprocity and collectivity.

HESTER REEVE explores the task of (philosophical) thinking and how it might be challenged-potentialised *via* live action, drawing, sculpture, poetry, and dialogue (as set out by physicist David Bohm). Commissions have been shown at 'Philosophy on Stage', Vienna, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, The Centre for Philosophy and Visual Art (Kings College London), and Tate Britain (under the umbrella of the Emily Davison Lodge). She is Reader in Fine Art at Sheffield Hallam University.

BECKY SHAW makes live and photographic works that explore the relationship between individual and society in complex social and material systems. This often involves making live, commissioned works for industry, care, neighbourhood and education contexts. She is currently working on an education, art, and anthropology research project exploring children's experiences of 'not fitting in', and a residency at Sarah Wigglesworth Architecture. Shaw is a Reader in Fine Art and lead tutor for the Art and Design Ph.D. programme.

SARAH SMIZZ is an artist, illustrative-mapper, qualified radiotherapist, and is undertaking a practice-led Ph.D. at Sheffield Hallam University. Her practice is motivated by empathy, questioning power, injustices, and the knowledge-paradigms that surround us, using drawing and socially engaged art methods to gain visibility, interrogate the spaces in establish authentic connections, and make information understandable. She has exhibited at Postmasters Gallery, NYC, Site Gallery, Sheffield, and Tate Britain, and has been commissioned by the BBC, NHS England, Channel 4, Sports England, The Guardian, TED, and others. She won the National UK Award for Radiotherapist of the Year (2016-17), a Guardian Education Award (2018), the Regional Impact Award (2020,) and is publishing a book with Macmillan Cancer Services (2021).

13 OCTOBER

ASHLEY HOLMES

Host: Michelle Atherton @ Respondent: Sharon Kivland

For me, transmission carries many meanings. It makes me think about broadcasting and gathering and collecting and the different ways in which we might prepare ourselves to receive information. It makes me think about connections and exchanges and the ways gestures of sharing feel more important than ever, given our current moment.



Double 6, collaborative performance with R.I.P. Germain at former Court Room of Leeds Town Hall.
Image: Jules Lister, courtesy of Poor Image Projects & Index Festival

20 OCTOBER

YUEN FONG LING

Host: Rose Butler @ Respondent: Toni Buckby

The lecture will focus on the project *Towards Memorial* to consider the implication of alternative forms of public monuments and memorial-making, in view of the Black Lives Matter movement and recent events leading to the removal of the Colston Statue in Bristol. I ask what forms of 'transmission' are appropriate and timely, between the monument and the process of commemoration. When these public monument are being contested, should these reminders of Britain's racial history be removed or preserved?



Towards Memorial, 2019
Image: Picture Story Productions

27 OCTOBER

HESTER REEVE

Host: Yuen Fong Ling ㊟ Respondent: Hestia Peppé

Ready let every part of me not only transmit but also receive. In this way, my studio is a spaceship but only if I am on the go. My brain-body is an antenna more than a thinking machine (so I suffer). Let the bridges burn (no more A to B). The words of all this are merely useful; not magical, not in existence (so I suffer my-self). Snake, come. We detect, we protect. Something else seethes away, a recipe I willingly sacrifice myself to. Dancing in the glow of salt and pepper, banging saucepans when able. I aim to stir the very turning while inside the whirling takes me over. Reverse engineering the apple cart; feeding other-wise.



10 NOVEMBER

SARAH SMIZZ

Host: Rose Butler ㊟ Respondent: Sharon Kivland

To transmit is to transfer: from communication, action, sending a message, to radiant energy that passes through a substance like in radiotherapy. In this talk I will discuss how the act of transmission underpins the values and hopes of my practice to help reveal the invisible, to draw out information and power imbalances, to use art practice as a tool to enact actions of radical care.



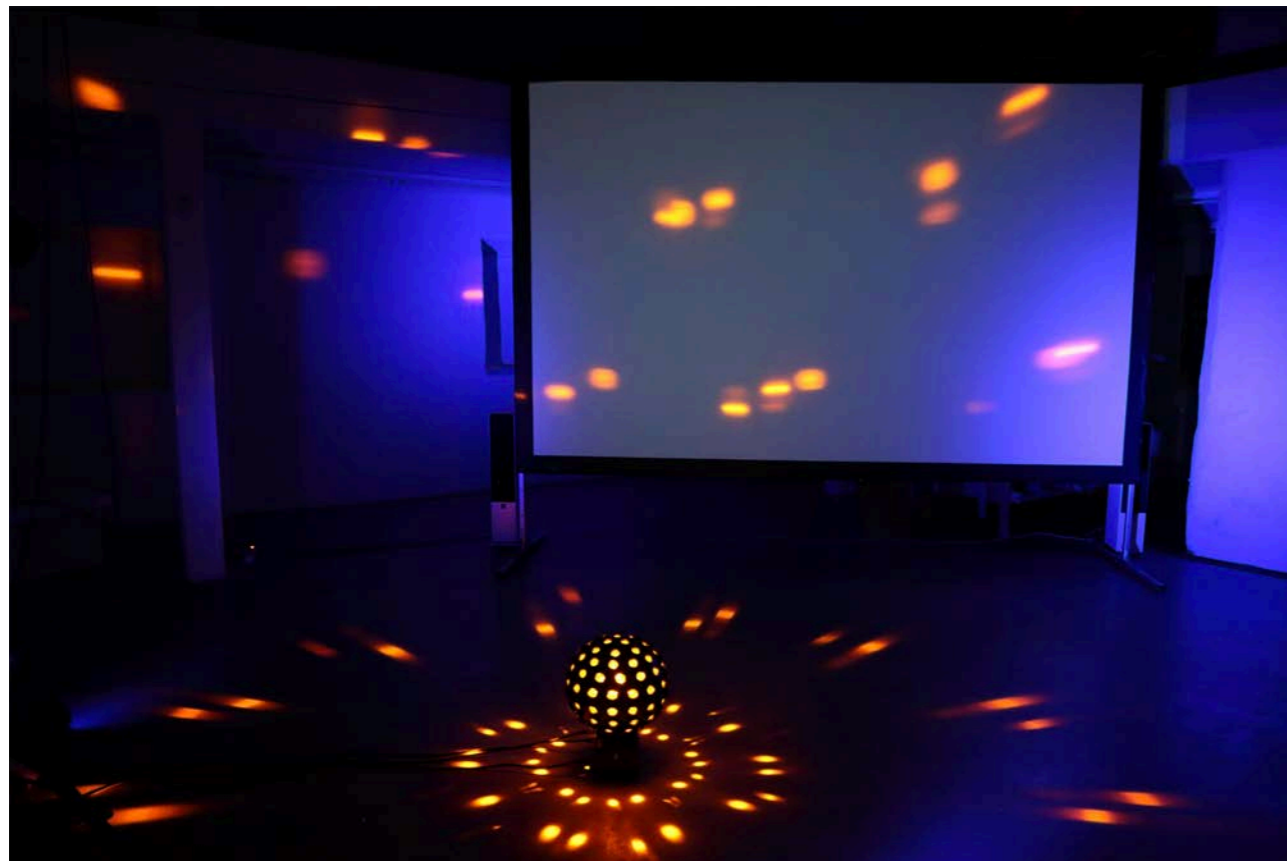
17 NOVEMBER

MICHELLE ATHERTON

Host: Rose Butler ☞ Respondent: Becky Shaw

From a conversation in 2019 between anthropologist and anarchist David Graeber and archaeologist David Wengrow: ‘neuroscientists currently believe that self-consciousness really only lasts for about seven seconds in human beings [...] a short window of consciousness where you reflect on yourself and after that you are on a sort of autopilot, like elaborate sleepwalkers. The exception to this rule is when you are talking to someone else, when you are in dialogue, which is why you imagine you are talking to someone else when you are thinking through a question [...] This is why most ancient philosophies began through conversations’.

Michelle Atherton’s project *The Repository of Irrational Gestures* opens a conversation with Becky Shaw on shared interests in film, collage, broken narratives, imaginary archives, animation, and material processes.



24 NOVEMBER

SHARON KIVLAND

Host: Michelle Atherton ☞ Respondent: Emma Bolland

Sylvain Maréchal wrote a strange tract in 1801, entitled *Projet d'une loi portant défense d'apprendre à lire aux femmes* ('Plan for a law forbidding a woman to learn to read'). It consists of eighty-two clauses, fortified by a hundred and thirteen reasons for the law, to prove that the woman who knows the alphabet has already lost a portion of her innocence (his friend and biographer Madame Gacon Dufour declared that he must be partially insane), in acquiring excessive education, linking innocence and ignorance, carnal knowledge and book knowledge. (I am convinced the tract is a masterpiece of irony.) The tract was republished in 1853 as *Il ne faut pas que les femmes sachent lire* ('Women must not learn how to read'). Reading women have subversive potential, and reading leads to errancy and transgression. Women once learnt to read through embroidering, as art or craft or labour, women’s work in any case, where the skill of the needlework was more important than the mastery of cursive script. There was a time that only the catechism and needlework were taught, but some demanded more, to be taught about everything. They read, and they learnt quickly. They understood forms. They assumed forms.



Les Femmes-renardes II, 2020
An unexpected event in *Disturbance: Witch*
ZAK, Spandau-Berlin
Photograph: Olga Vostretsova

An extract from
RESIGNATION LETTER TO 'CARE'
by Justin Hogg
in ON CARE,
edited by Sharon Kivland & Rebecca Jagoe
(London: MA BIBLIOTHÈQUE, 2020)

[There is a piece of paper that catches on the charred remains of scaffolding. Its ink is blurry and windblown but you can still make out the words. You feel completely unencumbered when picking it up to read. Though your lungs are filled with ash from the fires, the act of reading this note left for who knows renders your lungs capable, like a bouffadou has just scraped embers to the side before they scatter back unbothered to the centre.]

To whom it may concern,

I must retire my use of the word 'care'. I've come to realise that for me, it just lacks the necessary function required to fundamentally change the current state of things in my life, and the lives of the people close to me. I wouldn't be so naive to talk about changing the world. I would like to begin in my community first, and by extension, this affects the world. The drafting of this letter hasn't been an easy conclusion to come to, but I've realised over the years that I couldn't care less about care. This is not simply a matter of an upgrade in vocabulary, but a veritable grazing at the recesses of a history to which I have been repeatedly denied access. All of the great people of the world, in an effort to stand up against the very things that have oppressed them, have sought to destroy a proper noun and in doing so, attempted to fundamentally change their conditions. The enslaved in Saint-Domingue sought to destroy the Master, and accomplished just that before a new master sprang forth from fertile grounds; the Black Panthers in Oakland, California sought to destroy the Police Officer by converting him into a Pig, before the state and COINTELPRO extralegally exterminated their movement. I can no longer ignore the thrust of my ancestors. The next attempt at destruction must be on 'Care'.

'Care' has been hijacked by the parasitic, capitalistic healthcare systems of the western world, in which the only Care afforded to those ailing is the individualistic and surface level personalised facade of a predetermined, privatised Care system. I can defend my use of the world no longer. It should not be Care that drives the internal and external forces of our rhythms and movements towards each other, but a relation, a concern. For Care is bound up in duty, in showing up, as people do at a meaningless march or a protest. The discourse of bodies, and numbers. The one who Cares attaches a limb to the mass of a formless shape and disconnects at the first sign of turbulence. The ones who Care fly feet first into the rain cloud and eject at the grumbling of thunder. People march the streets, escorted by the police whose limbs have been replaced by weapons and by the end of it, some are in jail and the rest are at home or clocking in to another day in which the previous one was forgotten. Care is bound up in a placing of, a neat setting of the table, a responsibility which seeks to lock a collection of individuals in a space of unchanging violence. Care has to be taken up. Care turns the one taking it into a spectator; the wind rushes between their ears and they can't stop it, the cells mutate before their very eyes like a kaleidoscope forcibly attached to the retina. Care belongs to and is at the same time a hierarchy. It is a matter of importance: who has the means, who has the paper, and damn the rest, they can rot in the waste bin for all this world Cares. Care is a matter of either/or, either you care or you don't and there's no in between, there's no third way, only the light switch prop on the bottom of the prop box.