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# SURFACED

Surface and Materiality  
in the Screen Environment

“Our relationship with the screen and the interface isn’t simply a visual one, it has changed from being a tool that we used at our leisure, to a necessary conduit for social interaction, pavlovian in its schema and invisible in its ubiquity, the screen is the threshold of our dematerialized condition. Painting takes its place in the world alongside and within this dominant way of seeing, reconfiguring our relationship and understanding to what is ‘real’ and tactile.”

The artists selected here aren’t necessarily directly concerned with digital dialogues or dematerialisation, however they all have a vested interest in surface and materiality. This exhibition attempts to draw attention to this interest and contextualize it within these broader ideas - touched upon at the end of this document.

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**Jim Cheadle’s** complex multiple dimensional abstract paintings are derived from his interest in mark-making, processes of reproduction and simulation, and the interface between the real and the digital. His surfaces are partly cast using bespoke mould-making and casting methods and his marks or components are created separately and then assembled and integrated into an almost seamless flat surface. He studied at Central St Martins and has exhibited most recently at the Lubomirov/Angus-Hughes Gallery, Summer Salon, (2016). He sells work privately in the UK and abroad.  
<http://www.jimcheadle.co.uk>

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**Alison Goodyear** explores the idea and possibility of how an artwork might intervene in the ‘normal’ regime of vision, whilst exploring the materiality of paint and process. Using materials such as silk and paint mediums combined with paint and photography, her chronicling of process within process combines: the mindless with the mindful, digital with physical, production with reproduction, ‘authentic’ with ‘inauthentic’. She has recently completed a practice led PhD at Chelsea College of Arts. Recent group exhibitions include: ‘The Image’ at Venice International University in Venice, ‘Suspicious Minds’ (Arts Council England funded) project at NN Project Space in Northampton, and ‘MK Calling’, Milton Keynes Gallery (2017).  
<http://www.alisongoodyear.co.uk>

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**Alexis Harding’s** entropic highly physical paintings emphasise their own materiality through a (literally) shifting calculated paint chemistry. His work is often seen as a negotiation between control and contingency using devices such as the grid as a reference to the flat picture plane in relation to his shifting surfaces. He graduated from Goldsmith College, London. Recent exhibitions include; In Abstracto, a group show with Ian Davenport, Mark Francis, Joseph Marion, Peter Schuyff and Patrick Tabarelli and the two man show; The Extended Field, an exhibition with Mark Francis both at the Luca Tommasi Gallery in Milan during 2017. He won the John Moores Painting Prize in 2004 and his works are in numerous collections, including the Irish Museum of Modern Art and the UBS Collection in London.  
<https://www.facebook.com/AlexisHardingArtist>

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**Peter Lamb** reworks photographic images of his paint spattered studio floor, playing with scale while exploring ideas of authenticity, gesture and meaning. His images are overlaid with paint and collage, creating an ambiguous surface for the viewer to decipher. He graduated from London's Camberwell School of Art and over the past fifteen years has exhibited his paintings in group and solo shows across the globe. Recent solo exhibitions include the Torrance Art Museum in California and the Boetzelaer | Nispen gallery in Amsterdam. Corporate collectors include the Amex Group, Deutsche Bank and Iceland Air. <https://www.peterlamb.org>

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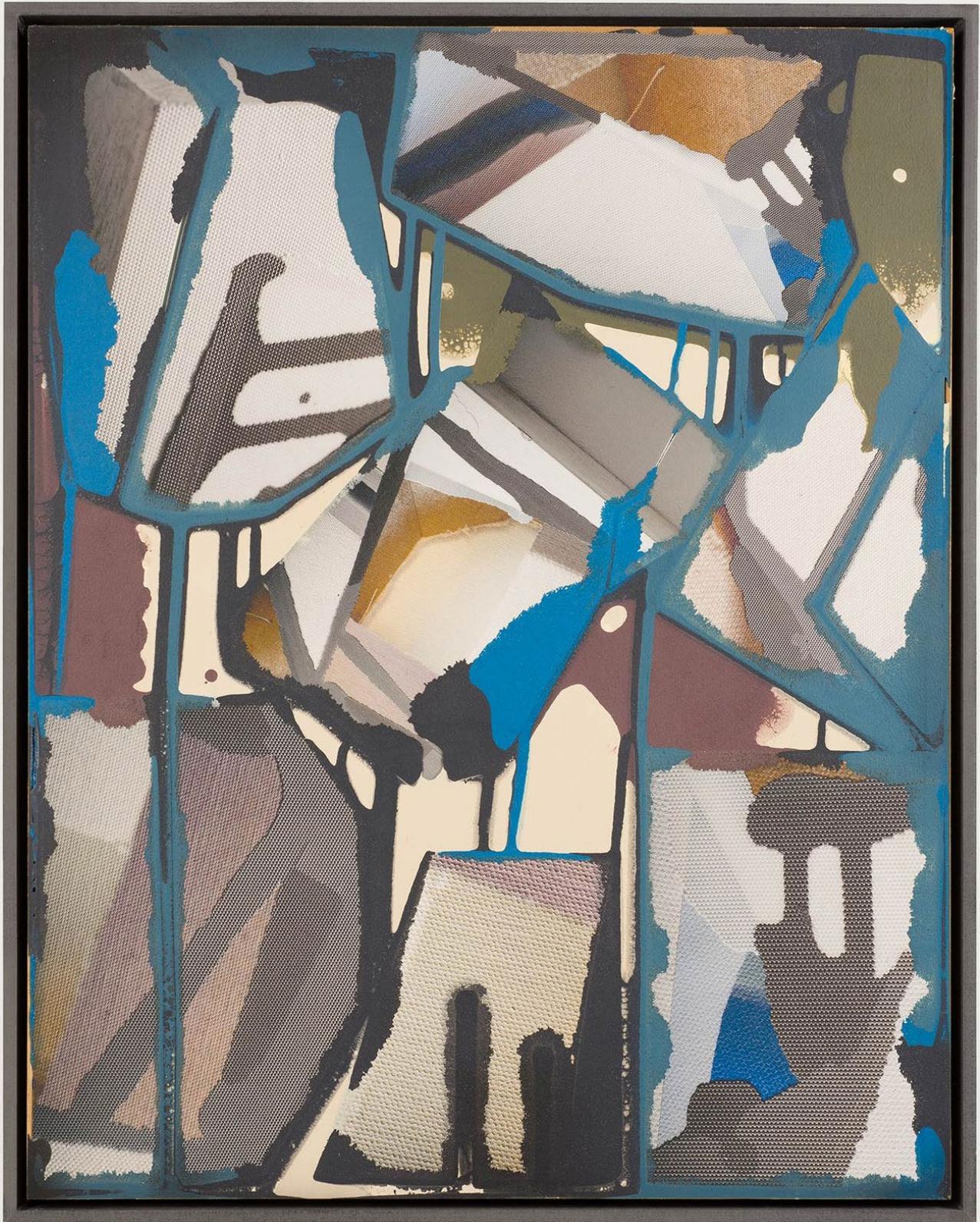
**Antoine Langenieux-Villard** places the question of the surface and the support at the heart of his investigations, utilising varied techniques such as sewing and collage. He reveals the pictorial plane as an assemblage of diverse elements, bringing together previously painted materials, fragmented gestures and remnants from earlier works. Langenieux graduated from Central Saint Martins in 2017 where he was awarded the Queen's Scholarship Award (2016) and the Kate Barton Painting Award (2017). His exhibitions include: Drawing on not knowing at the British Museum (2016), 'In Residence' at the Griffin Gallery (2017) and Notes on Painting at the Koppel project (2017). <https://antoinelangenieuxvillard.com>

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**Donal Moloney** makes intricate paintings that contain fragments of images from a wide variety of sources (drawings, sculptures, digital collages, etc). Through his slow and protracted process of painting these images are transformed into something jewel-like and precious – becoming a vehicle for his interest in fantastical imagery and ambiguous narratives. Moloney lives and works in Manchester and studied at the Slade School of Fine Art (MFA) and the University of the Arts, London (PhD). He is a Senior Lecturer at Liverpool Hope University. Recent 2016 exhibitions include 'New Works on Paper' (solo), A Small View, Liverpool. The John Moores Painting Prize (Visitor's Choice Award), The Walker Art Gallery and Pleasure Islands, Artwork Atelier, Salford. <http://www.donalmoloney.net>

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**Sarah Kate Wilson** is not the sole creator of the 'Shrink Wrapped Paintings', she asks her audiences to become collaborators. These collaborators are invited to 'wrap' objects into the paintings, therefore, the paintings' surface continually evolves and how they are experienced will depend on when they're seen. Wilson lives and works in London and studied at the Slade School of fine art (MFA) and the University of Leeds (PhD). She is an associate lecturer at Camberwell College of Arts, UAL and Bath Spa University. Recent exhibitions include 'Do Disturb', 2017, Palais de Tokyo, Paris. Iris, (solo) 2016, Baltic 39, Newcastle. A solo show at the Armory Centre for the Arts, Pasadena, California in 2015 and a three-person exhibition at the Newlyn Gallery, Cornwall in 2014. In 2015 she curated 'Painting in Time', at The Tetley, Leeds, which then toured to The School of the Art Institute, Chicago in 2016. <http://www.sarahkatewilson.com>



JIM CHEATLE  
Fragmentation No.34 2015  
Resin, pigments, canvas, inkjet prints, MDF  
70 x 54.5 x 6.5 cm



JIM CHEATLE  
Fragmentation No.36 2016  
Resin, pigments, canvas, inkjet prints, MDF  
70 x 54.5 x 6.5 cm



ALISON GOODYEAR  
Panda bandit 2017  
Acrylic, ink and oil paint on silk and canvas  
100 x 80 x 4 cm



ALISON GOODYEAR  
Ifolsaittanor 2018  
Acrylic, ink and oil paint on silk over canvas  
51 x 82 x 3.2 cm



ALEXIS HARDING  
Washout 2016  
Oil and gloss paint on MDF  
122 x 104 cm



ALEXIS HARDING  
Unfixed Descendents 2016  
Oil and gloss paint on aluminium  
79 x 120 cm



PETER LAMB  
The same in animal form 2017  
Digital print on synthetic canvas, aluminium subframe  
280 x 190 cm



PETER LAMB  
A slow gaze charged 2017  
Digital print on two synthetic canvases, aluminium subframe  
265 x 192 cm



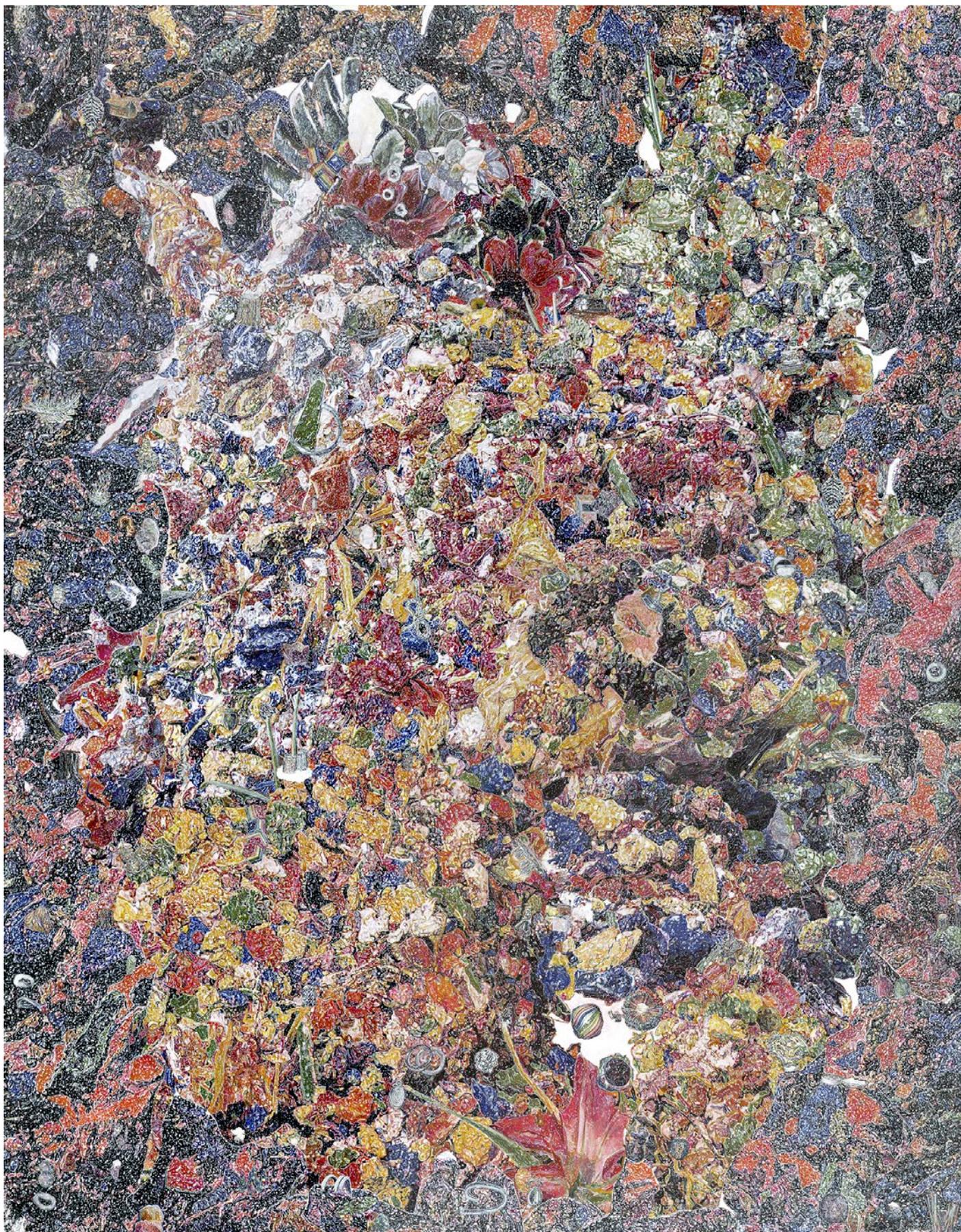
ANTOINE LANGENIEUX-VILLARD  
Veduta 2017  
Acrylic, ink on dyed and sewn materials  
140 x 200 x 34 cm



ANTOINE LANGENIEUX-VILLARD  
Voyelles 2018  
Vinyl emulsion and collaged materials  
100 x 120 cm



DONAL MOLONEY  
Cave floor 2015  
Acrylic on canvas  
32 x 43 cm



DONAL MOLONEY  
Reliquary 2014  
Acrylic on canvas  
47 x 59 cm



SARAH KATE WILSON  
Clear 2016  
Stretcher bars with mixed media  
125 x 100 x 5 cm



(ABOVE)  
SARAH KATE WILSON  
Crabstep 2016  
Stretched canvas with mixed media  
95 x 60 x 12 cm



(RIGHT)  
SARAH KATE WILSON  
Crabstep (audience participation)

# SURFACED

## Surface and Materiality in the Screen Environment

**During the 90's when discourses regarding the position of painting in relation to the screen and 'new media' were prevalent, the pixel – perhaps a specificity marker of this new medium was still apparent. The desktop computer had already become a powerful simulator, offering immersive experience with infinite layers and real world metaphors that we were able to grasp onto; files, folders, paths, etc.**

However it had not yet become the seamless omnipresent virtual environment that we know today. Social media had barely begun and as late as 1998 only 9% of UK national households had internet access<sup>1</sup>. Today in 2017 more than 90% have access. The frequency of internet use has grown from 35% of 16.2 million adults using it daily in 2006, to 80% of 40.9 million in 2017<sup>1</sup>. In 2016 it was reported that the average American devotes more than 10 hours a day to a screen of one type or another.<sup>2</sup>

The pixels have long since diminished in size and are no longer discernible as displays on both desktops, mobiles and handheld devices increasingly offer higher definition, while processing power has increased exponentially to supply them. The screen has become an ever-present material condition of viewing and increasingly this luminous environment provides many with their first encounters with works of art.

Our relationship with the screen and the interface isn't simply a visual one, it has changed from being a tool that we used at our leisure, to a necessary conduit for social interaction, pavlovian in its schema and invisible in its ubiquity, the screen is the threshold of our dematerialized condition. Painting takes its place in the world alongside and within this dominant way of seeing, reconfiguring our relationship and understanding to what is 'real' and tactile.

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### REAL PAINTING

Does this environment create an underlying pressure for artists to make work that is more screenable, quicker to apprehend, less concerned with scale and depth? Or, does it reinvigorate the 'real' and the haptic? Can we view work with the same engagement as before, can we still 'look' at it in the same way? Writer and publisher Matt Price describes a recent series of paintings by Jim Cheatile;

**“[He] creates something that one would normally imagine only to be possible digitally, here presented live and direct as a 'real', tactile, physical object – it might, on-screen or on first glance, look like a Photoshop collage, but it is a real painting, running rife with materials and processes. In an era of image overload, our usual speedy perception and cognition are forced to stop in their tracks and made to work that bit harder to get to the bottom of all this.”<sup>3</sup>**

Matt Price, 2016

Prior to digital media these differentiations wouldn't have been needed, and perhaps the work might have been described more historically and in relation

to other works of the time. Are we ‘forced’ to stop and work harder? What happens when we are compelled to assert the materiality of work because it’s viewed on the screen?

Perhaps analogous to this is the experience of exiting the cinema, there is sometimes a lingering sense that the world outside has been tinged or abstracted from how it was before entering. Almost as if the cinematic experience has bled over into reality, and for a while this can be felt, until it fades like an afterimage. If we were continuously exposed to film in this way, would this experiential afterimage persist and would we be able to discern its effect?

“One thing about which fish know exactly nothing is water, since they have no anti-environment which would enable them to perceive the element they live in.”<sup>4</sup>

Marshall McLuhan, 1968

When we engage with works of art now, when we consider the meaning of surface and materiality, is it possible that an experiential afterimage from our daily interaction with screens is still present?

## **MATERIAL RELATIONS**

Giulliano Bruno, author of ‘Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality and Media’<sup>6</sup> proposes that materiality isn’t necessarily a question of materials but rather concerns the substance of material relations, that theoretically materiality can be thought of as a surface condition. She opens her book with the following quote from the Roman poet and philosopher Lucretius:

There exists what we call images of things  
Which as it were peeled off from the surfaces  
Of objects, fly this way and that through the air...  
I say therefore that likenesses or thin shapes  
Are sent out from the surfaces of things  
Which we must call as it were their films or bark.<sup>6</sup>

Titus Lucretius Carus, c. 99 BC–55 BC

Bruno argues that the surface of the screens surrounding us today express a new materiality as they “convey the virtual transformation of our material relations”. In her online article ‘Surface Encounters’ (2015)<sup>7</sup>, Bruno points out that the haptic is what makes us “able to come into contact with” things, thus constituting the reciprocal contact between us and our surroundings, however hapticity is also related to our sense of mental motion, as well as to kinesthesia - the ability of our bodies to sense the mutable existence of things and movement in space.

“...these screens, which have become membranes of contact, exist in our environments in close relation to the surfaces of canvas and walls—also undergoing a process of substantial transformation. And so it is here—in this meeting place that is surface—that art forms are becoming reconnected and creating new, hybrid forms of admixture.”<sup>7</sup>

Giulliano Bruno, 2015

1. Office For National Statistics: Internet Access - Households And Individuals, 2017; Published 3 August 2017

2. Nielsen Company Audience Report: <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/reports/2016/the-total-audience-report-q1-2016.html>

3. <http://www.fusedmagazine.co.uk/jim-cheatle-fragmentation-series/>

4. Marshall McLuhan, *War and Peace in the Global Village*, Bantam, NY; reissued by Gingko Press, 2001 ISBN 1-58423-074-6

5. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (ed. Jacques-Alain Miller), N.Y.: Norton, 1998

6. *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media*, Giulliano Bruno, University of Chicago Press; 2014

7. *Surface Encounters*: <https://remainmodern.org/pre-launch-programs/supercommunity/surface-encounters-giulliana-bruno>. 2015