

Murlie Mul
This exhibition is
Cancelled 2017
installation view



sold and privatised, and community centres being defunded and closed, spaces that are sheltered, heated and central have become increasingly difficult for the public to access and put towards their needs. As such, giving over the neoclassical ground-floor gallery of GoMA to spontaneous play and organised groups and classes is a powerful gesture, and the fact that the show has baited the tabloid press only serves to emphasise its sincerity.

The allowance of time and space, although not explicitly assigned as such in the exhibition materials, also brings to mind the terms that artist residencies are often couched in, except here these precious resources are being offered by the artist back to the audience. Now, a few weeks into its run, accounts and documentation are emerging of the ways that people have been using the space, including heartwarming images of couples waltzing beneath the gallery's grand, barrel-vaulted ceiling and tales of children running around or lolling on beanbags. So far, so engaging, but what will be fascinating to follow is whether this activity tails off as the exhibition progresses, becomes regularised or is broadened in unexpected ways. With regard to the project's potential, it is the allocation of several months that allows the time necessary for news of this free space to potentially reach beyond the usual networks that would be aware of art gallery happenings. With less time, the invitation to propose uses for the space would seem exploitative, inferring the expectation of a swift and entrepreneurial turnaround of ideas, but several months is long enough to mull it over, to seek advice and to pluck up the courage to make a proposal – it is realistic. ■

LAUREN VELVICK is an artist and writer based in Manchester.

Everything Flows

Millennium Gallery Sheffield

7 June to 3 September

Bringing together nine Sheffield-based artists, each with something to say on the volatile theme of flow, this exhibition gives the viewer a lot to take in. 'You must rest. Are you resting?' The male voice-over

from Peter Martin's *We See Ourselves, We See Each Other*, 2015/17, asks many questions and makes many assertions, all taken originally from a *Learn a Language in Your Car* tape, heard while colour slides of suburban life and leisure flow gently but ironically past. Youth, age and death all seem to lurk in the background of these mostly benign sequences – especially in the artist's most recent remake of the work, using a more emphatic choice of images, concluding with that of a graduation ceremony and a bird balancing on a coconut shell, while the familiar voice intones, 'think about it again'.

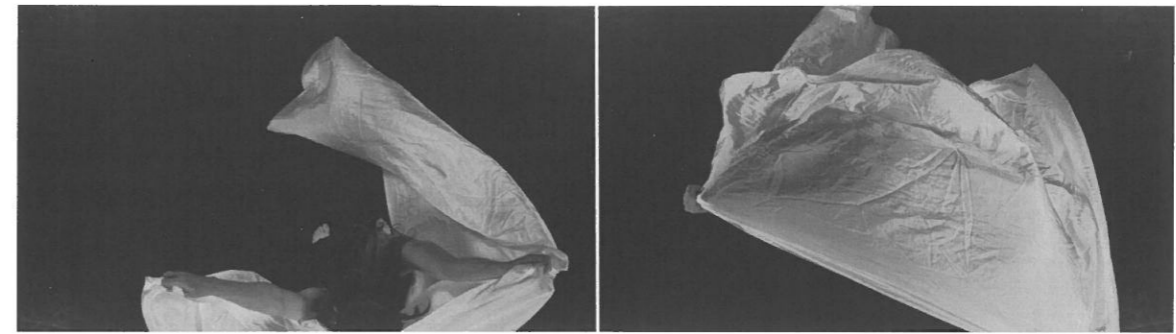
Time spent considering Ruth Levene's two-channel video installation *Hidden Waters*, 2015, reveals endless movement, on and around even the most 'fixed' architectural objects, such as outbuildings, water tanks and walkways, or geological features, notably in the rugged Yorkshire landscape. The work follows the journey of tomato seeds through human waste and the sewage system to piles of rich sludge where they germinate, grow and produce fruit that, surprisingly, contains no harmful chemicals. In fact, following the project, the artist claims on her website to have made jars of what she called Sheffield Shit Chutney, which proved perfectly edible. Nearby, Levene's *Yorkshire Rivers*, 2015, which are prints delicately mapping underground water systems, watercourses and sewage pipes, appear like the fine veins seen in a dead leaf: natural networks that come together to sustain life.

It is often difficult, though, to control flow. Paul Barlow's paintings explore this, applying thinned paint to the reverse side of the canvas to let colour leak through, as well as removing and restretching the canvas to reveal lines and angles where paint has settled and dried. But in the world of industry and toolmaking, flow is highly controlled, as Joseph Cutts's *Trigger Happy Discipline*, 2015, goes to prove. Here, close-up shots on two video screens of metal drill-bits, plaster mixers and earth augers, all brightly coloured in reds, yellows and blues, their exposed metal surfaces gleaming, are observed with a painstaking eye for detail and composition that deliberately recalls Japanese ikebana. As each object slowly revolves, its curved and swerving metal shape comes to life, producing a kind of dance, pulsing through space.

Many different expressions and facial forms mutate across the canvases of Ryan Mosley's paintings, in which human form seems always to find definition in among the fleeting influences and implications of colour. The artist's portraits, like *Labyrinth*, 2017, or *Susan*, 2017, place human subjects inside geometrical arrangements of colour, while in larger paintings like *Bacchanal Poetics*, 2016, colour-forms settle down to encompass and shape a world in which figures experience life. In the case of *The Architect*, 2016, the main figure, one of Mosley's characteristic bearded males – this one clutching a racing bike – stares out at the viewer beneath a female portrait, hanging on a horizontally striped multicoloured wall, the bike's wheels appearing in multicoloured radial segments. Here, fixedness seems temporary, making life a mysterious, momentary conversation between different human presences.

Echoing the lateral stripes in the *The Architect*, Natalie Finnemore's adjacent sculpture, *Untitled*, 2017, looks rather like a curled-up roller blind. Made of birchwood sections, the scrolled part, which rests on the floor, could also serve as a bench, with what amounts to a wall of wooden slats standing erect behind it. In a way, the structural ability of the object to curl or coil has been paused, its vertical side threatening to fall, which only goes to emphasise further the lower, rolled section's potential to unwrap. In defiance of its apparent designed purpose, the object threatens to flow downward and outward, across the gallery floor.

Roller blinds permanently cover shop windows in certain areas of some cities, especially in Greece, where Victoria Lucas



photographed roadside advertising billboards for her installation *Remedy*, 2012 (Reviews AM407). Working in the aftermath of the country's government debt crisis, the artist captured an unusual aspect of financial outflow. Each billboard lacks any advertising, but instead of a smooth blankness, the metal faces installed to carry text and image are ravaged by weather, corrosion and graffiti. The title of the piece comes from one word that remains displayed above one of the billboards, but collectively they carry a message about austerity to all who drive by or simply look up from the parched landscape to scrutinise places where, formerly, a shallow and illusory source of distraction could be found.

It becomes increasingly apparent as one walks around this show that the viewer's presence is itself part of a flow: the movement in and around, as well as in and out of the gallery by the public. Entering a darkened space in the centre of the exhibition, this public flow interacts with Rose Butler's two-channel video work *Come and Go*, 2016, a modern-day take on the early 20th-century film of the 'serpentine dance' patented by Loie Fuller in which she manipulates a great amount of fabric to spectacular, whirling effect. Butler's approach to this subject does not, however, position the camera in a similar position to that of the audience in a theatre, as was the case in Edison's original film, instead observing her dancer from above, in the manner of a hovering drone. Watching the dancer within the gallery, viewers who shift position realise they are interfering with the images they are seeing, which periodically speed up or slow down in response. It comes to mind that all this interference with the monitoring of flow-as-spectacle recalls current concerns in certain countries, including this one, with other flows – those of migrants, for instance – and the ethics surrounding their possible control.

One artist, Ian Nesbitt, addresses migration flow with *Open Kitchen Social Club*, supplying food to the local community including refugees, and Annexinema, a group that curates nomadic cinema events. Amongst others included in the showreel seen here, Roger Sutcliffe's *Wall*, 2017, comically employs garden snails to defy Donald Trump's speech promising 'a great wall across the southern border', while Katie Davies's *Commonwealth*, 2009, takes a wry look at citizenship ceremonies at Sheffield Town Hall, as a brass band plays 'Abide With Me', movingly. It should go to the top of the flow charts. ■

BOB DICKINSON is a writer and broadcaster based in Manchester.

London Round-up

Mazzoleni • Skarstedt • Richard Saltoun

The summer show at Mazzoleni in central London is an oddly recursive object. The exhibition *Colour in Contextual Play*, its subtitle describing it as 'an installation by Joseph Kosuth',



has as its named curator Cornelia Lauf. Initially the Arte Povera artist Emilio Prini planned, at Lauf's invitation, to assemble an exhibition of monochromes for Mazzoleni, selecting himself and four contemporaries – Enrico Castellani, Lucio Fontana, Yves Klein and Piero Manzoni – to fulfil this role. But, a few months before his death in 2016, Prini requested that the project be given to Kosuth. The show now carries Kosuth's name and is proposed as the latest in a series of exhibitions in which he has incorporated work by his contemporaries or precursors – including, for example, 'The Play of the Unmentionable' at the Brooklyn Museum in 1990. Lauf herself was involved in Kosuth's projects, adding one more twist among the many threads that make up this show's complex lattice of frameworks and affiliations. In 'Colour in Contextual Play', works by Kosuth replace Prini's projected contributions.

In his 1975 autobiography, Roland Barthes considered that if he were a painter he 'should paint only colours', a field 'freed of both the Law ... and Nature'. Notwithstanding its 'Chinese-boxes' curatorial conceit, 'Colour in Contextual Play' in fact looks rather restrained, slightly too tense and tight, a prismatic diffusion of colour into a limited range of constituent parts. Walls dedicated to black and white are followed, as you circumnavigate the gallery, by ones on which grey, green, red, yellow, violet and 'colour' are, as the philosopher Nelson Goodman might observe, 'exemplified'. Blue asserts its absence by not making it into the mix. Each wall, painted in its allocated hue, carries a previously unseen piece from Kosuth's signature series 'Art as Idea as Idea', 1968. These works, infamously, comprise a dictionary definition of a single word, the text having been printed in white on a black background. The format repeats itself throughout: the yellow wall holds two works by Fontana and Castellani in variations of that colour; aligned with the definition for red are, this time, two pieces by Castellani and one by Fontana. On the white wall

Rose Butler
Come and Go 2016
video

Ruth Levene
Yorkshire Rivers 2015