

Alex Clarke, Jeremy Deller
Krista Gay, Carmen Kirkby
Jennifer J. Lee, Connor McNicholas
Magali Reus, Ariane Shick
Julia Wachtel, Alberta Whittle

Ecosystems of Relations

13 January – 19 February, 2022

Super Dakota is pleased to present “Ecosystems of Relations”, a new collective exhibition dedicated to presenting works, which relate to the notions and the environment of intimacy, togetherness, empathy and community. The exhibition will be on view from 13 January until 19 February, 2022. The exhibition borrows its title from “Poetics of Relations” by a Martinique-born philosopher, Edouard Glissant who called attention to the means of global exchange that resist homogenization of culture and produce differences from which potentialities of new systems emerge.

One significant research pillar behind the “Ecosystems of Relations” is Bell Hooks, an American author, feminist and social activist. In her writings, she reminds us the urgency of revisiting the fundamental questions — “What is the state of love and intimacy in the age of Internet, social media and high capitalism?”, “What is our “collective mind”? To answer these questions, we turn to each other to collectively renegotiate and reimagine the articulation and implementation of alternative ecosystems of relations.

The age of neoliberal self-care, in which our digital avatars float through the endless stream of social networks, has ironically led to an increasingly shared experience of separation and alienation. As a result, there seems to exist an urgent need for a critical reimagination of alternative possibilities of relating to one another as never before. In light of this, the exhibition reflects upon the value of re-experiencing the shared sources of connection through recovered knowledge of collectivity. The exhibition presents a wide range of works stretching over paintings, sculptures, videos and performance works by the following artists: Alex Clarke, Jeremy Deller, Krista Gay, Carmen Kirkby, Jennifer J. Lee, Connor McNicholas, Magali Reus, Ariane Schick, Julia Wachtel and Alberta Whittle. In different ways, these artists re-discover the infinite possibilities of relations between oneself and Other as situated within an environment, ultimately leading towards that which lies perhaps in between the places we occupy.

Furthermore, the selected body of works attempts to deal with the notions of mutual exchange, the power of participation and togetherness as situated specifically in the age of privilege. Significantly, ideas behind some of the works magnify and vocalize impact of the colonialism and the past, continuous inequality and evolving identity politics. If one questions the impetus behind re-discovering collectivity and spaces of liberation throughout the spectrum of visual and media culture, one has to re-contextualize, re-learn, undo, reform and alternate their own perception of the world in general. These works, therefore, invite us to re-scale our empathy and nourish mutual support, solidarity, complementarity, respect for one another and care for the horizontal and radiant plenitude of the living that we call an environment.

1. JULIA WACHTEL

Sad Person Standing, 2020

C-print, AP print

Image: 55.8 x 55.8 cm / 22» x 22» inch

Frame: 58 x 58 x 3 cm / 22.8” x 22.8” x 1.1” inch

Edition of 1 plus 1 artist's proof
(SDJW31)

2. JEREMY DELLER

English Magic, 2013

HD Digital video

Duration: 14 min 23 sec

Edition of 6 + 1 AP (EC 1/1)

(SDDJ0003)

3. JENNIFER J. LEE

Car Engine, 2021

Oil on jute

9 x 13 inches

22.86 x 33.02 cm

(SDJL001)

4. MAGALI REUS

Empty Every Night (12:58 ACCESS), 2019

Fibreglass, polyester resin, pigments, powder

coated steel rod and aluminum, sprayed UV

printed resin, sprayed plywood, leather cord;

2 parts

51 1/8 x 24 3/4 x 13 in.

130.0 x 63.0 x 33.0 cm

(MRSD002)

5. ALEX CLARKE

I Remember Me, 2021

Reverse glass painting, gouache, mirror solution,

enamel on glass

24 x 16 in

61 x 41 cm

(SDAC71)

172.7 x 304.8 cm

6. MAGALI REUS

Settings (*Twice Pacific*), 2019

Powder coated and airbrushed steel, aluminium,

sprayed UV printed resin, acrylic, grub screws

27 7/8 x 27 7/8 x 2 in.

71.0 x 71.0 x 5.0 cm

(MRSD001)

7. JULIA WACHTEL

Hope, 2015

Oil, flashe and acrylic ink on canvas

60 x 130 inches

152,4 x 330,2 cm

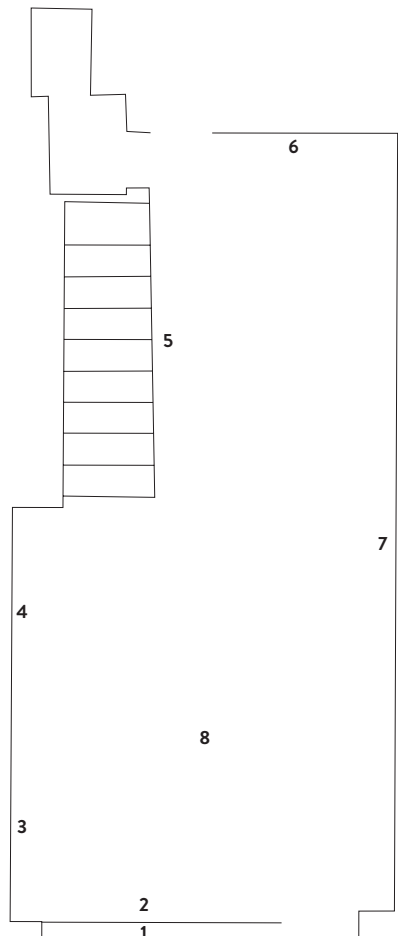
(SDJW09)

8. CARMEN KIRKBY

Fields of Vision, 2022

Live-performance piece

Custom made bench with goldleaf



MAIN ROOM

9. ALBERTA WHITTLE

Celestial Meditations I, 2017

C-type print

91.4 x 64.7 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP'

(SDWA0003)

10. KRISTA GAY

BLACK PUSSY, 2020

HD video

Duration: 6min. 40sec.

(KGSD001)

11. CONNOR MCNICHOLAS

The Distance Earth Keeps, 2020

CCTV camera, bronze, photograph, reed, yarrow,

magnet, hardware

74 x 18 cm

29 x 7 inches

(SDMC022)

12. ARIANE SCHICK

Plot Points, 2021

5 vocal works, mp3

(SDSA034)

13. JENNIFER J. LEE

Untitled (Christmas Party), 2021

Oil on jute

12 x 9 inches

30.48 x 22.86 cm

(SDJL002)

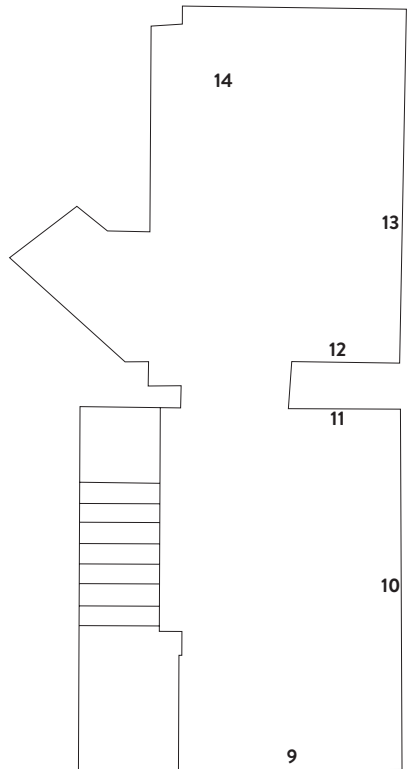
14. CONNOR MCNICHOLAS

Every Portal, 2020

HD video

Duration: 1 hour 22min. 32sec.

(SDMC023)



GROUND FLOOR

Alex Clarke (b. 1988) lives and works in London. He holds a BA from Central Saint Martins, London and a post-graduate diploma from The Royal Academy Schools in London. Since 2016 he has been an Associate Lecturer at Central Saint Martins, London. Alex Clarke's works examine the essence of relationships and the gestures of exchange and discussion to reclaim intimacy through language between connection and connectivity.

Clarke identifies that the very reason to want to make an artwork at all can be framed by the desire to talk to one another - that both artwork and practice act as placeholders and expanded gestures of discussion or exchange. To load this most basic social mechanism with such primary value positions Clarke's work in a vital space beyond abstraction and into real-life moments of encounter, regaining an intimacy to connection and connectivity.

Jeremy Deller (b. 1966 in London) lives and works in London. Deller studied Art History at the Courtauld Institute and at Sussex University. He won the Turner Prize in 2004 and represented Britain in the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013. He has been producing projects over the past two decades which have influenced the conventional map of contemporary art. He began making artworks in the early 1990s, often showing them outside conventional galleries.

"English Magic" was conceived and created for the British Pavilion at the 55th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia. The exhibition reflected the roots of much of Deller's work, focusing on British society - its people, icons, myths, folklore and its cultural and political history. He weaves together high and low, popular and rarefied to create unique and thought provoking work. "English Magic" addresses events from the past, present and an imagined future. Deller frames these instances in a way that is contemporary but also true to the original subject, weaving a narrative that is almost psychedelic; hovering delicately between fact and fiction, real and imagined.

The video "English Magic" formed a major part of his exhibition for the British Pavilion in 2013. The film brings together many of the ideas behind the works in the Pavilion, featuring visual and thematic elements that reflect Deller's interest in the diverse nature of British society and its broad cultural, socio-political and economic history. The music is performed by the Melodians Steel Orchestra from South London and was recorded in Studio 2 of Abbey Road Studios in London.

Krista Gay (b. 1998, Los Angeles, CA; Lives and works in New York, NY) [she/her] is an artist working through photography, video, language, and sound installation to study the sciences and histories of the Black American body — with the aim of making the essential connections to her place as a Black woman in today's society. She has constructed a portal to reveal a history of the subjugation of Black women in the name of experimentation and science and contextualize the realities in her own existence.

“BLACK PUSSY”, 2020 is a dystopian satire created with video archives sourced via the cyberspace. Throughout the videos, “BLACK PUSSY”, 2020 explores the three main Black female archetypes, and the ways in which the media utilize those images to control the narrative of Black women. Thinking of the scientific and historical wrong done onto Black bodies. Thinking of the archetypes; Mammy, Sapphire, and The Jezebel. Thinking about the images of the Black female form circulated throughout the internet, television, news, and other forms of media. The work pauses here; an encounter, an act of refusal, a riot, a listening, staying with the trouble. She welcomes the viewer into a space where voyeurism is acceptable and then sit back and watch the watcher. Gay is looking in from the other side in order to reclaim the gaze upon the Black female body.

Gay’s work was previously shown at Kunsthall Stavanger and Sadie Coles in London.

Jennifer J. Lee (b. 1977) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York and holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Carnegie Mellon University and a Masters of Fine Arts from Rhode Island School of Design. Lee paints densely compact images with oil on jute in a quasi photo-realistic style. Her subjects, sourced from internet searches, sit at the intersection of recognizability and genericism. Lee has referred to her deep image searches as a metaphorical road trip for observational painting, with the artist moving forward into parts unknown. The rough jute she paints on has a diffusing quality; the surface forces Lee’s brush strokes to fizzle at the edges, creating a low-res quality that refers back to the digital nature of the source imagery. The resulting painted textures accumulate into images that obliquely refer to abstract painting movements such as Op Art, but ultimately relate to the artist’s own personal perspective:

“*The Christmas party* painting to me feels like a moment captured in some sort of merry making, all squished together. Although the scene feels like it should be happy, it has this disorienting feverish pitch to it. The distortions obscure particular certainties, like emotions and actions.”

“*The car engine* to me can be looked at as a metaphorical object of a social system. There’s all these connections that make it work. The image is of a car engine bay with the hood open, suggesting that there is something to fix and that can be fixed.”

Carmen Kirkby (b. In 1996, London, UK) currently lives and works in the South West of England. Kirkby holds a BA in Fine Arts from Central Saint Martins and was most recently a resident artist of the Associate’s Studio Programme in London.

“Fields of Vision “ (2022) is proposed as an active conversational project, inviting people of various ages to share experience of their self’s adaptation to cyberspace and social platforms. This project asks for the sensitivity of memory and the placement of the self in relation to this cyberspace. The current online hemisphere and chain of dialogue or advertisement indicates that cyberspace functions as something which is rhizomatic, as we

can speculate that something either physical or emotional appears to hold some form of traceable link to one another. As ideologies, products and mindsets have come to be spread among this method of exchange, there is the impression that an online axis of transfer exists, leading to a consequence of multiplicities built upon the foundation of things which we had previously possessed. The indication of multiplicity is then understood as a thing of cross referencing, and an act of remixing multiple objects or nouns with one another. The term of remixing is then relative to entanglement, juxtaposition, and contrasts which are embedded within this web.

Connor McNicholas (b. 1990, Oakland, New Jersey) holds an MFA from ICP-Bard, Queens, New York (2015) and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. McNicholas combines disparate objects and materials from varying times, cultures, and contexts into sculptural assemblages that present nonhierarchical ways for structuring reality. In his approach, McNicholas articulates both poetic variations and diversity while dissolving boundaries between binaries such as past and future, primitive and modern, natural and synthetic, and model and reality.

His works recall a need for the bonds, “his new materiality induced in his most recent works, McNicholas creates speculative environments from what is already around us. Through looping materialities, McNicholas enters into conversation with ecological and philosophical movements that challenge the life of the object and duration of the ephemeral in the ever-changing temporality of our world: now more than ever as we are not only considering our distance to the past and the future, but also to each other in the present.

Magali Reus (b. 1981, Den Haag, the Netherlands; lives and works in London) sculptures are accumulations of images and things – she draws on objects she finds around her, recombining them into something strange and unfamiliar. Although a keen observer of the physical world, Reus avoids using readymade objects, instead each element of her sculptural jigsaws has been meticulously fabricated using a mixture of technological and traditionally craft-based techniques. Reus’ works possess an innate organizational logic: they absorb the miscellany of the world’s material landscape, extracting from it a language of vital parts. Their choreography of components emerges out of the intersection of virtual (3D modeling, 3D printing) and more physical processes (wood carving, casting, and metalwork).

Recent solo exhibitions include Hot Cottons, Bergen Kunsthall (2017); Night Plants, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, St. Gallen (2017); Mustard, The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2016) among others. Reus was awarded the Prix de Rome 2015. Her work is included in international collections including Tate Collection, UK; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam; Hessel Collection of Contemporary Art, New York; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen; Rubell Family Collection, Miami; David Roberts Art Foundation, London; Zabłudowicz Collection, London, Sarvisalo, New York; Arts Council Collection, UK.

Ariane Schick (b.1984, Ashford, England) previously studied at the Beaux Arts in Paris. Schick uses image, sculpture, text and sound to reference fictional spaces that frame impassive female protagonists. Places become backdrops. Character and place are represented as polymorphous, schizophrenic and sometimes interchangeable. Their instability in turn creates visually diverse work, that allows slit-like views and sensual shortcuts to interiority fused with environment.

Plot Points is a series of five short vocal works made for the show Ecosystems of Relations. Each work develops an idea or moment in which ecosystems of relations might be felt or experienced. Individually each audio piece treats one subject or topic and as a series they become illustrations or examples to get close to that which might otherwise feel ungraspable.

Julia Wachtel (b.1956) lives and work in New York and Connecticut. Wachtel's oil, acrylic, and silkscreen-on-canvas paintings, which are drawn from popular culture, explore the impact of our image-saturated world. A figure of the Pictures Generation artists who emerged in early-1980's New York, Wachtel's early work mined posters of movie stars, pin-up girls, political figures, and pop music icons, as well as cartoon figures drawn from commercial greeting cards. Her current work primarily explores the vast space of the internet, a place of constantly replenishing images on a disorienting scale. Wachtel appropriates, juxtaposes and ultimately distills these images into concentrated paintings, shifting the original logic and proposing an examination of the emotional, political and aesthetic conditions of an image dominant world.

Wachtel's work can be found in institutions such as the MoMa, New York; MOCA Los Angeles; The Whitney Museum of American Art; FRAC Normandie; Saatchi Collection, London; Cleveland Museum of Art; Brooklyn Museum; Vanhaerents Art Collection, Brussels; Zabłudowicz Collection, London, etc.

Alberta Whittle (b.1980, Bridgetown, Barbados) is Glasgow-based artist, researcher and curator who works in film, sculpture, performance, collage and choreographed installation. She was the recipient of the 2018-19 Margaret Tait Award, in 2020 was one of the 10 artists to receive a Turner bursary award from Tate Britain, in place of the annual Turner Prize, the Henry Moore Foundation artist award 2020 and the Frieze Artist Award 2020. Whittle is currently a Research Associate at The University of Johannesburg. In 2022 she will represent Scotland at the 59th Biennale di Venezia.

Through the activism arising from her practice, Alberta seeks to pose questions and unsettle people from their positions of privilege and passivity. Key themes in her work include anti-blackness, legacies of slavery and apartheid, the erasure of black people and people of colour in everyday society as well as precarity rooted in environmental deprivation. Whittle's photo collages perform and re-perform rhythmic actions and inter-actions between history and the body. Her vision pulls to the surface gestures and responses at play and at work as 21st century Black folks bob and weave among the historical terrors of tomorrow and futuristic pleasures of the past.

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