# David Cotterrell: nyartsmagazine.com : David Cotterrell's Unlikely Endeavor

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The first book to chronicle the work of British artist David Cotterrell, The Impossible Project exploresCotterrells fascination with technology, politics and romance.

Cotterrells work often pushes the parameters of art and scientific discovery: playing with anacknowledged tradition of eccentric invention, he customizes existing technologies to assert new use-values.A practice divided between the gallery and the public realm, the differing demands of eachintervention are reflected in Cotterrells sensitivity to site as both location and subject. Hes apostmodern, interstitial figure whose methods are as mercurial as his image: always changing, alwaysexpanding, always redefining what it means to take up space. As an architect and as an artist, Cotterrellhas added a stock of gestures to the now inscrutable and defiant contemporary air-molding scene.

Where did he come from?His first solo exhibition, Reference Frame, explored themes ofapproximation and translation in the process of representing behaviour through data. The links betweenthis work and the origins of criminology in French 19th Century pseudoscience will creep some peopleout and delighting others with its craniometric overtones.Reference Frame took on important questionsabout representation that no conceptualist can ignore. This concern with the framework of ourperceptions has remained with the artist throughout his development. Gods Eye View [&II & III]consists of threeprojections exploring facets of the symbolic order imposed on human experience of the world. The workboth celebrates and questions the wisdom of attempting prediction. Struck by the inadvertent beauty ofsystems created to ease understanding of a complex world, Cotterrell here replicates the language ofpredictive modelling to highlight what is lost (and gained) through the process of translation.

Working with a set of climatic statistics to predict possible future weather systems, isobars continuouslycreate new patterns, which metamorphose the reality of a tornado into an agreeable aestheticexperience. Traffic flow around an urban centre and its inevitable gridlock as more and more vehicles areintroduced into the equation mimics video games like SimCity and Populous. Red dots, each representinga human life, dash to and fro: bunching together in desirable spaces and leaving others abandoned.These works have an eerie quality reminiscent of science programmes that exhibit the acceleration of thespread of HIV or ebola through a healthy host. We see human choice and naturally occurring patterns reduced to game-like conditions.

The quest for God-like status is brought down to earth by the limitations imposed by humanityscollective imagination: prediction machines are only capable of replicating identified trends. Our inabilityto witness all of the convolutions of existence is reduced to an abstraction: a translation or BeginnersGuide to this shared existence. Cotterrell employs the visual language of meteorologists and spatialanalysts to create works that openly question the wisdom of urging the blind sibyl to tell her tale.

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