

David Cotterrell: Reference Frame

Venue: Danielle Arnaud contemporary art, London

Curators: Danielle Arnaud

Date: 10th September 2003

David Cotterrell's first solo exhibition, Reference Frame, explored themes of approximation and translation in the process of representing behaviour through data.

The exhibition investigated areas of human experience for which the visual language of representation must, to allow comprehension, involve symbolism and acceptance of arbitrary convention.

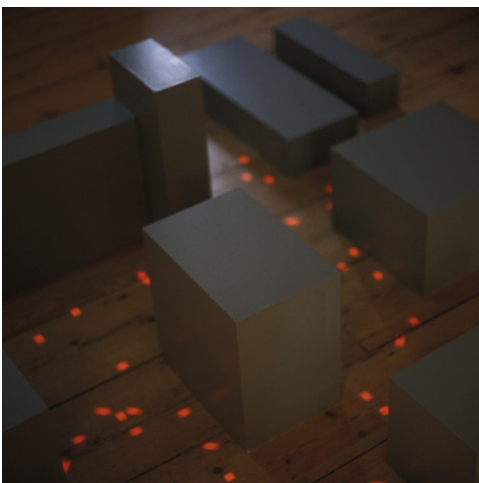
Gods Eye View consisted of three projections exploring facets of the symbolic order imposed on human experience of the world. The work both celebrated and questioned the wisdom of attempting prediction.

Enlisting the aid of the Met office and the Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis, these works offer up the mechanisms employed for the visual mapping of the virtually invisible for consideration. Struck by the inadvertent beauty of systems created to ease understanding of a complex world, Cotterrell replicates the language of predictive 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 continuously create new patterns, metamorphosing the reality of a tornado into an agreeable aesthetic experience. Traffic flow around an urban centre and its inevitable gridlock as more and more vehicles are introduced into the equation mimics video games like SimCity and Populous. Red dots, each representing a human life, dash to and fro: bunching together in desirable spaces, leaving others abandoned. These works have an eerie quality reminiscent of science programmes in which we witness the acceleration of the spread 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 humanity's collective imagination: prediction machines are only capable of replicating identified trends. Our inability to witness all of the convolutions of existence is reduced to an abstraction: a translation or Beginners Guide to this shared existence. Cotterrell employs the very visual language of meteorologists and spatial analysts to create works that openly question the wisdom of urging the blind sibyl to tell her tale.

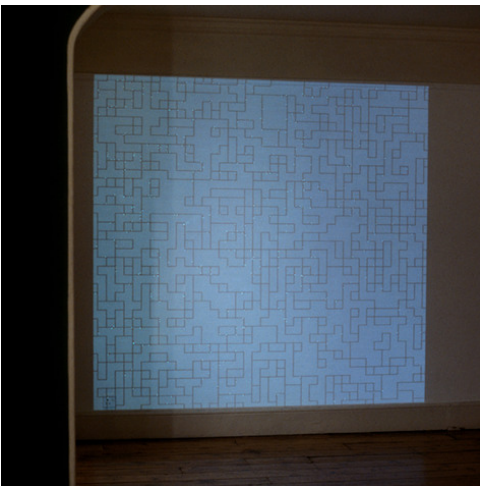
Text by Jordan Kaplan



God's Eye View I : Pedestrian Simulator Credit: David Cotterrell (2002)



Exhibition Invite



Gods Eye View II : Gridlock Generator Credit: David Cotterrell (2003)



God's Eye View III : Weather System Credit: David Cotterrell (2003)