

David Cotterrell: Machinic Alliances

Venue: Danielle Arnaud contemporary art, London

Curators: Maria Walsh, Mo Throp and Danielle Arnaud

Date: 4th July 2008

Co-exhibitors:

Rieko Akatsuka, Liz Arnold, Edwina Ashton, Marcus Coates, Lucy Gunning, Jaki Irvine, Paulette Phillips, Kate Smith, Mo Throp, & Clara Ursitti.

The 'machinic' is a process that expresses our capacity as humans to form alliances with non-human forces, be they animal, insect, plant or virus. The exhibition 'Machinic Alliances' takes this Deleuzian premise as the basis from which to propose unholy affiliations between categories of human/animal/technological.

The artworks in this exhibition seek to question, challenge, and flirt with traditional concepts of Western subjectivity. Thrown to the wind is the plot of an original wholeness and purity. Instead, 'machinic alliances' scramble and graft singular identities, creating perverse formations that escape the Oedipal trap of filiation (Donna Haraway 2004). These formations or assemblages have no father, like Frankenstein, and eschew anthropocentric identification. In their multiplicity, they push against the limits of form.

Categories are undone.

Awkward conjoinings arise.

Inhuman differences emerge.

But paradoxically, it is here in the interstitial spaces proposed by 'machinic alliances' that we can learn how to live differently. In these spaces, we can experience the 'mutual interdependences and productive mergers of forces' that characterise subjectivity at the end of the postmodern (Rosi Braidotti, 2006). The new alliances explored by the artworks in this exhibition do not reproduce the antagonism of one self against another self, but generate a bestiary of possible selves, liberating us from the alienating problematics of narcissistic recognition and opening us up to the creative becomings of being. The artworks in this exhibition propel us to imagine wacky and wonderful possibilities for our identities. Disturbing, yet pleasurable, these 'machinations' acknowledge the difficulty of difference, yet relish in the production of anomalous differences that exceed categorization.



Installation at Danielle Arnaud contemporary art (2008)



The modified telescope (2008)