

David Cotterrell: Monsters of the Id

Venue: John Hansard Gallery, Southampton

Curators: Helen Sloan, Ros Carter and Stephen Foster

Date: 11th February 2012

Responding to Cotterrell's civilian experiences of Afghanistan, this new body of work explores the contradiction between the abstraction of viewer experience and the nature of documentation.

Through image manipulation, CGI, installation-based reality and new projection techniques, the artist sets out to react to the media's representation of war; its landscape, history and community impact, alongside political, social and emotional effects. 'Monsters of the Id' examines the role that these pioneering technologies play in defining the essence of contemporary events and culture. The exhibition is a series of interconnecting pieces that aim to go beyond the standard media coverage of conflict, offering the viewer a deeper, more interactive experience of a terrain and tension never experienced in close proximity. Through virtualised vistas of Afghanistan that create an almost romantic point of convergence, a cross-over scent of art history's Sublime is additionally achieved.

The series of four works are bound together through an interest in dislocation and paranoia. The visual vocabularies being employed are extrapolations of existing commonplace convention, referencing cinematic, literary, simulation and gaming constructs. By subverting the context, Cotterrell seeks to create an environment that challenges our belief in the understanding of documentary, and the truth of film and photographic images.

Upon entering the gallery, visitors are immersed in a landscape that crosses the physical and the virtual. The disquieting Observer Effect presents viewers with a projected image of a distant, self-absorbed population. As audiences remain within the space, this virtual community grows in number and becomes distracted by their presence.

Searchlight 2 reveals illusory human shadows traversing a low platform terrain, suggestive of the desert landscape as seen by an aerial drone. The unnerving movements of this unidentified population are computer-generated and directly mirror the actions seen in Observer Effect. Working with creative 3D technology specialists Inition, David captured the desert scene using the latest 3D scanning technology.

Apparent Horizon renders immersive, virtualised vistas of a desert landscape. As viewers, our role hovers between sublime reverie and the quiet anxiety between periods of violence. The exhibition ends with a final cinematic flourish, enabling visitors to consider their role in the exhibition and its dialogue of control, observation truth and contradiction.

'Monsters of the Id' was a John Hansard Gallery exhibition co-curated with Helen Sloan, SCAN, and was accompanied by a new, fully illustrated publication. The development of the exhibition was supported through residencies with the Joint Forces Medical Group in Helmand province and civilian agencies in the northern provinces of Afghanistan enabled by Wellcome Trust and the RSA, and supported by a Philip Leverhulme Prize for research, Danielle Arnaud, Sheffield Hallam University, and Arts Council England.

The exhibition was accompanied by a publication designed and edited by Adrian Hunt, which can be purchased through Amazon and other outlets.

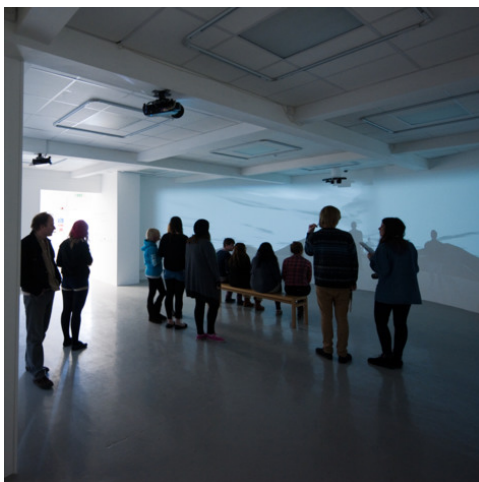
The exhibition was realised with the technical help of Zoha Zokaei, Julian Grater, Hydar Dewachi, Jan Wedekind and Robert Jeffries.



Exhibition Invite Credit: David Cotterrell (2012)



Entrance and Observer Effect Credit: David Cotterrell (2012)



Observer Effect Credit: David Cotterrell (2012)



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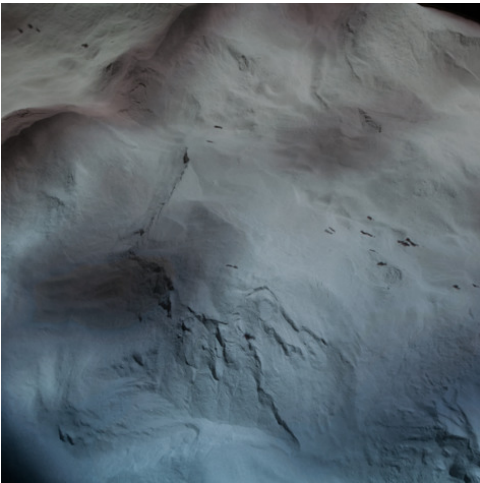
Searchlight II Credit: David Cotterrell (2012)



Searchlight II Credit: David Cotterrell (2012)



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Searchlight II Credit: David Cotterrell (2012)



Apparent Horizon Credit: David Cotterrell (2012)



Apparent Horizon Credit: David Cotterrell (2012)



Apparent Horizon Credit: David Cotterrell (2012)



Apparent Horizon Credit: David Cotterrell (2012)



Control Credit: David Cotterrell (2012)



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