
David Cotterrell: Empathy and Risk: Three Mirrors and a Wall

Venue: Danielle Arnaud contemporary art, London

Curators: Danielle Arnaud

Date: 13th January 2017

For his fourth solo exhibition at Danielle Arnaud contemporary art, Cotterrell presented three works from the "Mirror" project: a series of two-screen works considering polarised perspectives, drawing alternatively on assumption and objectivity. This evolving project is designed to explore the common human characteristics that could provide a stronger empathetic bridge between strangers than their contexts, roles and attire might suggest. Portraits of individuals are constructed in a manner that transcend or challenge place, prejudice, projection, assumption and fear of the other while at the same time providing insight into nuanced internal negotiations and narratives.

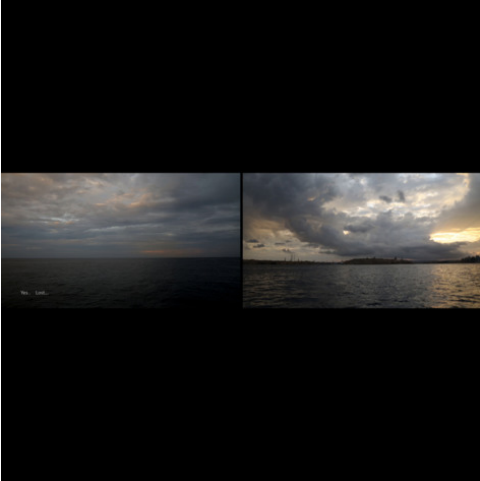
Mirror I: Hierarchy is the first work of this series devised to explore the anxieties and thought-processes of two protagonists within the world of surgery the patient and the surgeon. The installation considers the concerns and devices by which an impending operation is philosophically contextualised and the way the mind might wander under the catalytic pressure of approaching professional or personal risk.

Mirror II: Distance examines the distances between individuals who occupy, protect and work in worlds that they may not own or belong to. It is inspired by observations of the Diplomatic Enclave in Islamabad, a heavily gated expat community living in the capital city of Pakistan. Entry into the enclave and then, within the enclave, entry into the various demarcated territories inside is monitored by local Pakistani guards. In this installation, two such men observe each other across a distance as they listen to the visitors, the experts and the specialists discuss Pakistan, its people and its future.

Mirror III: Horizon examines what might transpire between two strangers if their communication was reduced to the language of lights. Filmed in Malta, set against the dramatic edges of the islands stunning coast and contextualized by the islands deep historical experience of visitors who arrived repeatedly by sea, the installation draws on the fluctuating paranoia of the current refugee crisis. Mirror III examines what might possibly be communicated between strangers if their words were reduced to beams of light and their faces need never be revealed. Mirror III features an accompanying essay by Sri Lankan playwright and theatre director Ruwanthie de Chickera, with whom Cotterrell collaborated with for the piece.

Within the exhibition, The Wall, a home installable table-top defensive barrier with an ensemble of miniature figurines, offers a playful interaction with the debates regarding walls, borders, and functions as an introduction to a conversation around xenophobic paranoia.

The exhibition, created around the metaphorical and physical barriers we construct between ourselves and as well as between people we watch from a distance, strives to bring together some of the self reflection, the challenges, the transparency, the illusion, the effort, the folly, the fear and the confusion that these very barriers bring to our lives.



Mirror III Credit: © David Cotterrell (2017)



Mirror I Credit: © David Cotterrell (2017)



Mirror III Credit: © David Cotterrell (2017)



Mirror II Credit: © David Cotterrell (2017)



The Wall Credit: © David Cotterrell (2017)