MOBILISATION: #3

RIVER CITY: THE WAY IS THE REASON: A WALKING TOUR BY ARTIST

ANTHONY SCHRAG

MLitt Curatorial Practice students from The Glasgow School of Art/University of Glasgow were set the task of responding to German artist and filmmaker Ulrike Ottinger’s exhibition Still Moving displayed concurrently at The Hunterian art gallery, with a supporting programming based at Kelvin Hall. Using the works on display as instigators, we have together identified the themes of:

Queer Representation
Travel and Journey
Objects and Performance

Each of these themes will be explored on one of the three Mondays during Glasgow International, leading up to evening screenings of Ottinger’s films. The programme has been structured via a series of curatorial interventions titled ‘mobilisations’. These mobilisations take the form of performance, moving image, an object study session, an artist walk and new commissions. We have titled these curatorial interventions ‘mobilisations’ in response to themes of travel, ethnography and performativity within Ottinger’s practice. We have, ourselves, mobilised as a group, come together to contextualise the incredible work of this outspoken, queer video artist for the contemporary art audience. Visitors are expected to stream through Glasgow International, many of whom will come from the furthest reaches of Scotland, the UK and Internationally, themselves on a journey of discovery.

Three days of activation throughout Glasgow International:

23rd April: Mobilisation 1: Queer Bodies and the Landscape workshop with Andrew Black. Black will draw on aspects of Ottinger’s work, as well as YouTube videos and the work of a diverse selection of other artists (including Jade Montserrat and George Kuchar), to explore the idea that [queer] cultural production all contributes to a communally-constructed fantasy or imaginary, that we share and give to each other. The workshop is intended as a space in which to think around where we can claim this in banal situations, in our lived everyday - and how this communal fantasising can shape our experiences of places where queer lives and experiences have not been explicitly archived, particularly regarding rural situations, and focusing on ‘provincial’ regions of Scotland and the Northern UK.

Participants are welcome to bring any material or ideas that they would like to contribute in response to the topic of discussion - USB sticks and Youtube DJing is welcome. We hope to create an inclusive space for screenings, talks and informal discussion, and will provide a homemade lunch. There will also be some discussion around Tarot, with the possibility of individual readings.

30th April: Mobilisation 2: Carnival of Objects. Carnival of Objects will be a study day in the Hunterian teaching labs at Kelvin Hall that will highlight an array of objects from the museum’s collections relating to themes of carnival, costume, and fantasy. Speakers from a variety of art-based backgrounds will discuss the selected objects, offering diverse and unconventional approaches to the study of art and artefacts.

7th May: Mobilisation 3: River City: the way is the reason, will be a walking tour led by artist Anthony Schrag. The journey offers a unique opportunity to re-discover how waterways made Glasgow an important city both in the medieval and industrial periods. Starting from Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, the tour loops back to the Hunterian Art Gallery.

Alongside these events, we have commissioned two new works for Kelvin Hall and Glasgow International:

Stasis feat. work by Lewis den Hertog: Using a sporting site within Kelvin Hall, this performance by Stasis will reflect the unusual historical and contemporary uses of Kelvin Hall: from sermons to circuses, library to gym. Working with themes of outlandish performance found in Ottinger’s work, Stasis and den Hertog have developed a site-specific performance as a social commentary on ideas of wellness, the multidisciplinary uses of the site, and its history of civic responsibility.

Stephanie Mann: For this programme, Mann has produced a new print through active exploration into The Hunterian archive. With a shared interest between artist and curator in object-human relationships, objects have been selected through their associations to the work of Ulrike Ottinger and bring to the front a flattening of hierarchy between these existences. The placement of artefacts alongside inanimate ‘things’ has created conversation between such; instigation through close proximity.

This associated programme has been led by: Lydia Honeybone, Xiaolian Lan, Christiana Myers, and Joshua Speer in consultation with Dr. Dominic Paterson and Dr. Alexandra Ross.
RiverCity: the way is the reason:

In response to Ulrike Ottinger’s frequent use of travelling and of epic journeys as both theme and methodology in her works, Mobilisation 3 presents ‘RiverCity: the way is the reason’, a walking tour by artist Anthony Schrag. Exploring concepts of ‘pilgrimage’ along the Kelvin River to the confluence with the River Clyde, the journey offers a unique opportunity to re-discover how waterways made Glasgow an important city both in the medieval and industrial periods. Wandering between old and new, this tour is also a dialogue between the artist and Glasgow’s heritage and landscapes. Starting from Kelvingrove Gallery, the tour loops back to the Hunterian Gallery, Scotland’s oldest public museum, where the artist will deliver a talk exploring the role of art within the public realm, informed by his 2638 km ‘contemporary pilgrimage’ walk from Huntly (Aberdeenshire) to the Venice Biennale in 2015.

Film screening: UNTER SCHNEE

A ravishing narrative by award-winning German filmmaker Ulrike Ottinger, the film Under Snow features a discovery journey of the mythical Oriental culture. By following the practices of two Kabuki performers and their encounter between past and present, the film reveals the uncanny lifestyle of Echigo region of Japan and engages the key element behind its unique culture: snow. In Ottinger’s works, water has been an important facet: its fluidity symbolizes transformation and communication across different media and disciplines. In this film, the water takes shape of the snow. The
deep and heavy snowfall not only forms the culture of landscapes but the tradition of this region. Her lens then turns to the distinctive daily routines of local inhabitants, along with their rituals ranging from festival and clothing to songs and poems, which have evolved, transformed and inherited to adopt this peculiar weather in century’s time.

About the Artist:

Anthony Schrag was born in Zimbabwe and is currently based in Scotland. He is an artist and researcher exploring the relationship between artists, institutions, and the public both nationally and internationally. He has been the recipient of numerous awards including The Hope Scot Trust, Creative Scotland, British Council, the Dewar Arts Award, the 2011 Standpoint Futures: Public residency award, as well as a Henry Moore Artist Fellowship.
We would like to express our sincerest thanks to Dr Alexandra Ross and Dr Dominic Paterson for their careful guidance, Glasgow School of Art, The University of Glasgow and the staff of Kelvin Hall and The Hunterian for their support and enthusiasm for our projects.