

Terminus

David Cotterrell with Ron Wright and Michael Day

The Scottish Queen, Park Hill, Sheffield, S2 5QX

8 August – 9 September 2015

Terminus is an exhibition of installation works by David Cotterrell as well as commissions by Ron Wright and Michael Day that explore the legacy of the Tinsley Cooling Towers site. The exhibition marks the beginning of the Tinsley Art Project and is part of the build up to the launch of a major £450,000 public art commission.

The new works featured in Terminus focus on the absurd beauty of infrastructure in a post-industrial landscape and has been commissioned by Sheffield City Council. It is supported by, S1 Artspace, Urban Splash, E.ON, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield Robotics, The European Regional Development Fund and the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

Filmed from the E.ON biomass power station's chimney over the course of a day, *On England's pleasant pastures seen* documents the sweeping vistas of the Tinsley Viaduct, local sewage works, train lines and canals that jostle for space alongside the hills of the Peak District. At 90m, the view is one that would have been visible from the top of the Cooling Towers, which were demolished in 2008. Cotterrell climbed the chimney in July with a six-lens spherical camera to record the panorama of landscape and infrastructure, which is projected on a bespoke curved wall in the gallery.

Developed with the support of Sheffield Hallam University's Cultural, Communication and Computing Research Institute, *Babel* is a 3D projection of a simple closed-system created within a game engine. The work depicts an infinitely expanding highway system: as traffic increases and queues build, a viaduct is formed. Gradually slip roads are added, lanes widened and a ring road is created to alleviate pressure. Sweeping feeder lanes distribute fast turning traffic and double, then triple deck highways appear. As capacity increases, more cars are added. As more cars are added, capacity is stretched. A vertigo-inducing monument to highway geometry gradually pierces the clouds as Cotterrell's ridiculous extrapolation is rendered in real-time.

Automotivation takes its title from Sheffield-based Cabaret Voltaire's 1984 'Gasoline in Your Eye'. Produced with the support of Sheffield Robotics, the work is based on traffic 'micro-simulation' engines, which use parameters including Aggression, Gap Tolerance and Lane-Discipline to demonstrate how driving populations behave. Realised as database engines, these models are not neutral: they depend on programmers' assumptions and judgments and pre-suppose that smoother flowing traffic is progressive. Automotivation demonstrates patterns of traffic flow like phantom roadblock as a kinetic sculpture of 12m² of Scalextric-style track and 55 slot cars.

Cotterrell also included his 2001 single-channel video work, *Car Culture* in which Cotterrell filmed a non-consenting driving public as he covered over two thousand miles of UK motorways in his Volvo 340. Recording tail-gaiters' antics as he drove between 70 and 80 miles an hour in the passing lane, Cotterrell used suction cups to attach a video camera to the interior of his car windscreen. With the lens pointing to the rear window, he was able to start and stop filming while still driving. The rationale behind the editing of *Car Culture* dictated that, if an approaching car's license plate were close enough to be read, the footage would qualify for inclusion in the work. All participating vehicles are credited, with their individual licence plate details appearing before they make their entrance onto Cotterrell's playfully malevolent stage.

Ron Wright's work, *Vantage Point* is a study of the Tinsley area as an interpretation of time, space and place. Using a mixture of static and moving single perspectives to capture the complex geometry of the transport system nestling above the almost still and natural beauty of the canal walk below to explore how our perception of familiar and unfamiliar territory can alter within differing frameworks.

It compares a tram journey from the city centres of Sheffield and Brussels to an outlying terminus within a parallel time frame. The work is presented on different screens to allow for different everyday experiences and journeys captured on iPhone to emerge as a singular experience. The soundtrack features field airborne and structural recordings as well as electronically manipulated sounds.

Michael Day's looped animation *Invisible Layers* (2015) takes as its starting point the mismatch between experience of the infrastructural landscape and the way this landscape is imaged. The piece uses terrain data from the United States Geographical Service and map data from the crowd-sourced Open Street Map to compile intricate, layered views of the locations of the head offices of major smartphone manufacturers.

Maps are most commonly viewed on digital devices – SatNavs or smartphones – and smartphones in particular offer the opportunity to browse, never alighting upon an image long enough that it can be properly absorbed or fully assimilated. The reductive and diagrammatic visual language of infrastructural mapping is designed to be purely functional, and has a very clear aesthetic. This piece places this visually complex overview in the context of relentlessly inattentive consumption and disposal of digitally mediated images.

The Tinsley Art Project link is a major public art project in the Tinsley Locks and Blackburn Meadows area of Sheffield. Terminus is part of an initial phase of the project that explores the potential, sets the tone and raises awareness and the competition for the main commission will be launched later this summer.

Further information will be available at:

www.tinsley.site