

smartphone in the painting that fixes the viewer's gaze is really meant to connect it symbolically to the show). On the other hand, Eisenman's *Artist's Block*, 2005, is more personally emblematic. Three vaguely historical artistic-looking figures head-butt a stack of bricks. This visual motif of frustration, vexed and unresolved, arguably speaks of a recurrence in painting that problematises and persists throughout its passage as a shared knowledge in this show more than a parallel of technological progression. ■

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Essex Road II

Tintype London 10 December to 16 January

As a local to Essex Road for over 20 years, the viewing of 'Essex Road II' at Tintype gallery is uncannily familiar, yet unsettling. These eerie back-projections onto the gallery's former shop window at night oscillate between screen and reflexive mirror, arresting the averted gaze of the occasional passer by.

This everyday location, an unremarkable London road with its commonplace shops and recognisable faces, is transformed into a landmark resonating with meaning. At times Essex Road becomes a memorial site, at others a place where the fragility of our embodied existence is played out. It is represented as a place of belonging and also of being excluded, a road where we perform rituals, where we celebrate but also commemorate our fleeting existence. There is sorrow, but most exhilarating of all, a place to laugh.

Essex Road is situated in the London Borough of Islington and is roughly a mile long, running parallel to its chic counterpart, Upper Street. The gallery is situated towards the top where the two streets converge. Islington has some of the most polarised neighbourhoods, with areas of affluence next to those suffering deprivation. It is classified as the fourth most deprived borough in London. Tintype represents the place

where these two worlds collide. This is the second year that the gallery director Teresa Grimes has co-commissioned eight 5-minute films with Arts Council England.

Jem Cowen's film *Unseen Unsaid* seems to purposefully reference the space where the two roads split at Islington Green. The film is made up of street-portrait shots, where these two worlds are juxtaposed. Bustling youthful subjects and busy shopkeepers coexist against the neighbouring slower world, where the old, the frail and the forlorn pass time. The weathered statue of Hugh Myddleton haunts the film. Located on Islington Green, this undistinguished landmark commemorates the Elizabethan engineer who brought drinking water to unsanitary London in the now hidden New River.

Uriel Orlow relocates his film *Letters from Edna* to nearby Noel Road, where Joe Orton lived with his lover Kenneth Halliwell. It is based on Edna Welthorpe's letters (Orton's alter ego), challenging the double standards of the establishment. The performance by Adam Christensen and Marcia Farquhar is staged outside Orton's former home, where a transgender subject seems to be waiting to be let in while painting over chipped nail-varnished fingernails or rolling a cigarette. The fragility conjured here, as the camera persistently lingers on the worn clothing pushing against the door, draws attention to the unrelenting sense of exclusion that can be experienced when a subject is posited as other.

Back on Essex Road or, as it used to be known, *Lower Street*, Melanie Manchot's steady-cam film pans along the thoroughfare, documenting shopkeepers as they pose performatively outside their shops. We shift from Lisa's chemist (as it is known) to the auction house and along to the funeral floral display, dedicated to Dave/Brother, drawing attention to the extravagant traditional north London funeral rituals, with horse-drawn carriages often parading the neighbourhood. The documentation of this familiar street where the inhabitants become locked in time is once again a touching reminder of a fleeting locality and our temporality.

Ruth MacLennan's *Zigni* is a documentary of an Eritrean restaurant on Essex Road. This film intercuts North



'Essex Road II'
installation view

Africans celebrating the gowned graduation of a young man with text drawn from Haile, the owner of the restaurant. The narrative recounts how he escaped war-torn Ethiopia 20 years ago, but his stoical survival also involves tremendous hardship – Haile is tired, prices are going up in the area, he wants to stop running his one-man show to write cook books. This is a touching portrait of an invisible man who prays to his food. He stands as a testimony to both the struggles of immigrant communities in this neighbourhood and the cost of increasing gentrification. Is this a vanishing world on the Essex Road?

Helen Benigson's fast text-based piece *Essex Hen Party* uses text to suggest corporeal excess. The speed with which the red words mark the screen makes it nearly illegible. Instead, indexical traces scar the gallery windowpane, much like the trail of physical and emotional devastation experienced at such female bonding binges.

Jordan Baseman's *E* draws attention to the psychedelic, which is presumably induced by Ecstasy and a drug-fuelled Islington nightlife. He films and re-films Essex Road at night on the same strip of 16mm film, creating a palimpsest of long-exposure shots.

Sebastian Buerkner in *Eaves Apart* again films at night, this time from a bus – but his cutting-edge digital graphics create a very different multi-layered kaleidoscopic effect intercut with associative text.

John Smith's *Fresh Fruit Venerable* re-presents the same street, but the tone now shifts to subversive humour, where the everyday is not what it seems. It is probably the funniest film he has made to date and definitely worth standing on a blustery street corner to experience. Smith (Interview AM355) deliberately misuses the World Lens translator app attached to the camera on his smartphone, which is set on the viewfinder to instantly translate from French to English. Shop signs produce surreal and subversive reconfigurations in mistranslations – it is as if Essex Road has come alive but is suffering from Tourette's. I will never be able to walk past North London's favourite fishmonger Steve Hatt again without recalling the shop sign reading 'Fish Steve Hates'.

These nightly screenings have brought this uncelebrated companion to Islington's renowned Upper Street into focus, inviting us to look again at an ordinary road and finding that it is not quite so ordinary. ■

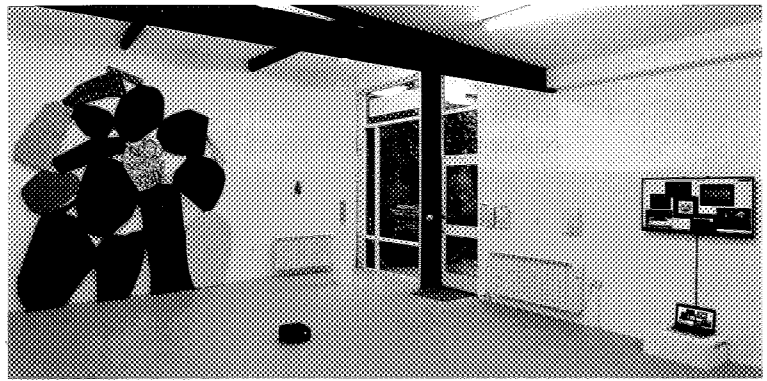
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Institution | Outstitution

The International 3 Salford

16 December to 29 January

In The International 3's small gallery space in Salford, big ideas are being explored. The slightly jarring title of this group show, featuring the best art school graduates of 2015 from across the North West, refers to one of the included works. 'Outstitution' is a new concept described through drawing in the form of a dictionary definition by Manchester



'Institution | Outstitution'
installation view

graduate Jordan Alex Smith. The first definition of this new noun states: 'Post art school ... Questioning the realms and traditions of the institution in a period of transition, uncertainty and struggle.' The directors of The International 3, a not-for-profit 'art agency' rather than a commercial gallery, have selected artists who embrace this period of post-art school instability and who, six months on, are persevering with practices that combine to present a promising glimpse of emerging contemporary art. A remarkably broad variety of media and styles appear within the limited gallery space, from paint and GIFS to sculpture and light installation, works that call attention to minute detail to those that refer to the solar system in which we float.

Louise Giovanelli's small-scale paintings reference Old Masters, sometimes lifting sections of imagery directly and engaging in a quest for technical prowess. Where in the past this might have been a glass of water in a Flemish still life, *The goals we pursue are always veiled*, 2015, skilfully depicts a mysterious box covered in sheer, draped fabric topped with Perspex, the title offering a knowing nod to art-historical painterly allegory. These works play with surface and texture: a back view of a lustrous chignon of oil-black hair or a cropped torso in shimmering silk in *The Painted Shirt*, 2015.

Two of these small paintings sit alongside Amy Stevenson's streamed, web-based moving-image work *Wicker Lix*, 2015. This dense piece comprises multiple pop-up windows, sometimes overlaid, largely streaming video of natural imagery: strolling sheep and deer, the Pacific Ocean, kaleidoscopic images of foliage. The central window shows a yellow emoticon face with dollars in its eyes 'licking' the screen. Wicker Lix is a spoonerism of Licker Wix, Wix being the name of the platform used to create the site, also advertised in a banner along the bottom of the screen. Near this emoticon is a similar comic image of money, a coin derived from *The Simpsons* computer game, which bounces over footage of Santa Monica, its artificial sound disrupting the gentle roar of the Pacific Ocean. Stevenson's conjunction of consumerism and bucolic images of nature – a sign for a nature trail, the fairground on a pier – with static and psychedelic colours suggests a troubled conception of humanity's interaction with the environment.

The internet and art history are both present in the process of Christopher Paul Curry, who has used the increasingly easy access to information, both analogue and digital, to create conceptually complex work. Curry researched the dimensions of every one of Pablo Picasso's cubist paintings to discover the mean size of this period