

TINTYPE

ESSEX ROAD IV

Edwina Ashton
Chloe Dewe Mathews
Benedict Drew
Judith Goddard
Matthew Noel-Tod
Paul Tarragó
Richard Wentworth
Xiaowen Zhu

8 December – 13 January

ESSEX ROAD IV – eight contemporary artists interpret a very particular part of London.

Now in its fourth year, Tintype's **Essex Road** invites eight artists to each make a short moving image work connected to the mile-long north London street.

The gallery's large window, on a busy corner in Essex Road, becomes a public screen for six weeks over Christmas and New Year. The films are back-projected into the window, shown on a loop from dusk to 11pm, highly visible to the general public who pass by the gallery.

EDWINA ASHTON makes films, drawings and objects featuring awkward animal characters that stand in for the human. Her hand-drawn, animated films hinge on the mismatch between our dreams and humdrum reality – offering absurdist narratives observing the everyday subtleties of human behaviour.

'And each December, up the Essex Road lumber twenty huge caravans...' Ashton's film, **Forest Bred Lions**, draws upon the marvel and magic of theatrical illusion – alluding to a time when spectacular circus acts and other 'wonders of the world' appeared annually in the Islington Agricultural Halls (now the Business Design Centre); 'And Mr John Corriers found an elephant near Kings Cross' – Ashton has shaped a surreal, poetic interweaving of image and text.

CHLOE DEWE MATHEWS is best known for ambitious photographic documentary projects that investigate sites and localities. For **Caspian** she spent five years in the countries that surround the Caspian Sea, exploring the unexpected ways in which humans are linked to the resource-rich landscape. **Thames Log** was a more personal journey in which she encountered people along the length of the river Thames. The project investigates the symbolic use of water

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107 Essex Road, London N1 2SL, UK Tel: 00 44 (0) 207 354 4360
info@tintypegallery.com www.tintypegallery.com

and contemporary ritual in the British landscape.

Dewe Mathews' film is a response to the systematic cataloguing of Islington streets undertaken in 1996 by Stanley Kubrick for what became his last film, ***Eyes Wide Shut***. The location photographs, stored in folders at the London College of Communication, became tantalisingly out of reach; Dewe Mathews was allowed to see them but not to reproduce them. She has crafted instead, a film about filmmaking - an unfilm - ***A Message to the Viewer***, a narrative about wanting to make a film and not being able to make a film.

BENEDICT DREW's videos and multi-media installations offer a fantastical, giddy, almost hallucinatory sensory experience. His work comments on socio-political themes, particularly digital technology, and voices a critical protest against authority and control.

Drew's film ***Incantation to rid this place of cars, without the help of Elon Musk (Essex road dub)*** is a mesmerising invocation, summoning a rebellious defiance... 'Tarmac Be Gone'.

Benedict Drew is represented by Matt's Gallery.

JUDITH GODDARD's work spans three decades of moving image. Known for her ground-breaking immersive large-scale video installations dating from the 1980's, her practice incorporates a diverse range of media, including photography, drawing, sculpture, and print. Vision and time, from both a personal and historical perspective are fundamental constituents of Goddard's aesthetic, informed by a highly adept process of observation, selection and construction.

Goddard's film, ***DerangeX*** reflects on the outcome of the British referendum to leave the EU. It's a short animated abstract work, which draws on the voter's glyph, a diagonal cross, set to the Carlos version of the European Anthem. Singly and as a repeated motif, the X glyph marks both that moment of allegiance and a shared binary form of notation - pulsating in a variation of rhythm and colour.

MATTHEW NOEL-TOD's film and video work combines references from early cinema, avant garde film, text messaging, internet technology, CGI animation, philosophy and literature. His 2012 film ***Bang!***, featuring talking dogs in Victoria Park, takes the audience on an idiosyncratic journey from Plato to the 2011 London riots. His work questions how new technology mediates our lived experience.

Untitled (Pickering Street) is a forensic close-up of the gutter, where the road meets the pavement, walking along Pickering Street, to the junction of Essex Road, opposite the window of the gallery. The study of the ground reveals a micro-narrative of present day London. The film is a single shot merging the forms of cinema's early 'phantom ride' films and a pseudo-approximation of hand-painted, collaged filmstrip work. Through the rubbish mingled with nature we see the footprint of human life under late-capitalism.

PAUL TARRAGÓ is an artist filmmaker whose work is a mix of underground experimentation and meta-fiction. His 'Badger' series plays on the conventions of children's television but with a droll, deadpan humour that allows the big issues of existence to be approached, dissected, and explored in a remarkably subversive way.

A kinetic combination of live-action, stop-motion and table-top animation, Tarragó's film uses that very fine bird the feral/ domestic rock pigeon (*Columba Livia*) as a recurrent figure in Essex Road. Tarragó has also been inspired by early cinema pioneer Robert W Paul, born in Highbury, who popularised the short film format, particularly 'trick' and news films. Expect a 25 fps flick book of a film: trickery and news.

Improvised placement is a leitmotif of RICHARD WENTWORTH's work. His recent book 'Making Do and Getting By' is a record of his observations of human actions; the marks and traces left on the urban landscape. Happenstance – the public and the private, exchange and sharing – fuel his curiosity. Many of his photographs have been taken on walks through the streets of Islington, where he lives.

"The city is full of bits of lost information – I have a great appetite for faults, breaks, cracks and seams." Richard Wentworth walks the immediate area of Essex Road near Tintype – impromptu observations, architectural details, clashes and collisions – "how things begin, how things meet, how things end".

Richard Wentworth is represented by Lisson Gallery.

XIAOWEN ZHU is an artist, filmmaker and writer whose work communicates the complex experience of being a diasporic person. Her film ***Oriental Silks***, (2015) explored the story of one shop, a silk emporium in Los Angeles, revealing the intricate relationship between people and objects in a migrant world. ***The Details Are Invented*** (2017) features the character of a flâneur – a 'foreigner' who strolls London like a walking camera.

Zhu's film ***Brief Encounters on the Milky Way*** documents the encounters of an astronaut on Essex Road. Walking down the street and standing behind a large shop-window, the astronaut appears to be a test of tolerance and openness towards something unusual, unfamiliar and unexpected. Passers-by, attracted and bemused by the bizarre sight, become participants in this brief encounter.

ABOUT ESSEX ROAD

Essex Road is in the borough of Islington, London. It is roughly a mile long stretching from the Angel to Balls Pond Road. Essex Road runs parallel to its more upmarket neighbour Upper Street and in fact used to be called Lower Road. It has a remarkable number of independent shops and small businesses and a strong neighbourhood identity. It is an area with marked social and economic divisions.

T I N T Y P E

107 Essex Road, London N1 2SL, UK Tel: 00 44 (0) 207 354 4360
info@tintypegallery.com www.tintypegallery.com

For further information please contact Carla von der Becke at Albany Arts
87 Gower Street | London | WC1E 6AF

e: carla@albanyartscommunications.com

t: + 44 (0) 20 73 88 09 97

m: + 44 (0) 79 74 25 29 94

w: www.albanyartscommunications.com

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