

# TINTYPE

## ESSEX ROAD 5

DAVID BLANDY  
MICHELLE DEIGNAN  
RÄ DI MARTINO  
DMITRI GALITZINE  
JAYNE PARKER  
HIRAKI SAWA  
NICOLE VINOKUR  
MICHELLE WILLIAMS GAMAKER

13 December 2018 – 19 January 2019  
Opening event: Wednesday 12 December, 6.30 – 8.30pm



Essex Road IV opening event, 2017. Photo Cameron Leadbetter

Tintype's ESSEX ROAD project has reached its landmark fifth birthday. A popular and much anticipated local event, the annual commissions are now recognised for their significance within the ecology of moving image arts in the UK – enabling eight artists each year to make new work. Over the past five years, Tintype has commissioned and produced 40 artists' films, which are back-projected into the gallery's window and viewed from the street as a form of public art.

The driving force behind the project is the desire to work with outstanding artists, producing new work that is shown in an unusual context. Whilst the brief is very simple – to make a short

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film that responds to one London street, Essex Road – the results have been astonishingly diverse. Turning a prism onto a very specific locale has, perhaps counter-intuitively, encouraged a magnificently adventurous response.

For ESSEX ROAD 5, Tintype's large window, situated on a busy corner in Essex Road, once again becomes a public screen for six weeks over Christmas and New Year, with the eight films screened on a loop every day from 4pm – 11pm.

#### DAVID BLANDY: *Interlaced*

David Blandy has established his terrain through a series of investigations into the cultural forces that inform and influence him, finding connections between place and identity, and revealing communal and personal heritage.

In *Interlaced*, Blandy documents the hidden life of Essex Road, closely examining the flora and fauna of the urban rock garden just off its main thoroughfare, and in turn interpreting the text of the street as a ready-made concrete poem. Spiders spin their webs as rubbish bins are emptied; people walk by as aphorisms shout at them from shop windows. The film forms a collage of human surfaces and hidden ecosystems, using macro and fast shutter speeds to see the familiar and the overlooked through an intense gaze.

*David Blandy is represented by Seventeen Gallery, London*

#### MICHELLE DEIGNAN: *Looking for Gary*

Michelle Deignan is an artist and filmmaker whose work explores the politics and mechanics of the production of stories that are made for mass consumption. She makes films that subvert the documentary form, often exploiting the familiar tropes of television production by pushing them to extremes so that the relationship of camera, narrator and subject relies on happenstance and bizarre coincidence.

Growing up in Ireland, ten-year-old Deignan first heard the word 'Islington' on television, when the band Spandau Ballet was introduced on Top of the Pops as 'five young guys from Islington'. Years later she discovered Gary Kemp, Spandau Ballet's songwriter, had worked in a shop on Essex Road. Gary Kemp is long gone. In his absence, Deignan takes a camera and a film crew to Essex Road in search of a new Gary.

#### RÄ DI MARTINO: *S X Dream*

Rä di Martino's work deals principally with our perception of reality and fiction, drawing attention to the absurdity of representing either. The artist's background in theatre and her passion for film emerge not just in her videos, but also in photographic and installation work. Sets, actors and props are used variously to pick apart subjects as diverse as human relationships, cinematographic traditions, the theatre of war and the fabrication of history.

Her film for ESSEX ROAD 5, *S X Dream*, is a visual collage of a futuristic Essex Road glimpsed in a dream:

'I was thinking about a video inspired by Essex Road, London  
But couldn't help thinking of  
A dream I had a year ago of a  
City that looked like the past and the future together  
And I was living in a big house with no walls

With all these high buildings clustered around  
And maybe it's the future.'

***Rä di Martino is represented by Copperfield Gallery, London***

DMITRI GALITZINE: *I had the Dream of a Perfect World*

Dmitri Galitzine's work is set within contemporary folk culture. He makes films documenting his own and others' involvement in the kind of stories you read about in regional newspapers: a boat made from a giant vegetable, an Elvis impersonator competition, a Western re-enactment society. Galitzine is interested in these endeavours that are both absurd and amazing, ordinary and epic. Behind the narratives are the individuals and communities who hold a palpable belief in something, however oddball.

***I had the Dream of a Perfect World.*** 'The new Packington Estate has got it all this time; canal side views, the replica Georgian terrace and the landscaped squares with benches in just the right places. And of course, the new trees; neat little saplings which arrived on lorries, eager to be planted (in just the right places). But someone had forgotten the palm tree. You know, the famous one, bent at the perfect angle. So we got to work and made one. From English oak. And everybody thought it was real. But our tree had no roots here. In fact, it had no roots at all. So we loaded the trolley and set off, down the Essex Road. To the next place that had forgotten their palm tree.'

JAYNE PARKER: *A Floral Tribute for Essex Road*

'In my work I try to see and understand what the body can do...inanimate objects can also be the body.' Jayne Parker's highly sensual films explore the body, personal space, sexual identity, the artist as performer and the relationship between music and film. Parker is particularly drawn to the physicality and precision of 16mm film.

For ESSEX ROAD 5, Parker's film takes its inspiration from the flower shop at number 97, Flowers of Islington. She says: 'It set me thinking about flowers and their presence, and how they accompany us throughout our lives. Flowers travelling along Essex Road in deliveries and sales, their presence punctuating the year, marking significant occasions, their life cycle mirroring our own.' The flower recorded in the film is an amaryllis, a tall flowering bulb originating from the Western Cape in South Africa, and seen for sale in the winter months. Parker has created a sensual tribute to the bloom that highlights its anthropomorphic qualities, in which the enclosed inner pistil and stamens appear to float in a sea of red.

HIRAKI SAWA: *Wall*

Hiraki Sawa's videos explore psychological landscapes, unexpected worlds and the interweaving of domestic and imaginary spaces. He is interested in the trickery and gifts of memory, the way time can pass at different speeds, and the tightly woven relationship between objects and emotional cues.

Sawa moved to England from Japan twenty years ago to study at the University of East London, alone and not speaking much English. He lived variously in two different low-rent flats in Essex Road, the first virtually opposite the shop that later became Tintype. In the basement underneath the Angel Café — a space with no windows— Sawa hibernated, only venturing out to get food, barely speaking to anyone for weeks. This strange, intense experience fuels his film

for ESSEX ROAD 5, a hallucinatory remembering and re-invoking.

*Hiraki Sawa is represented by Parafin Gallery, London*

NICOLE VINOKUR: *Unreal Estate*

Nicole Vinokur's drawings, installations and video work are intricately layered arrangements that bring history, situation, mythology, material and process into correspondence, revealing the ways in which image systems are embedded in our historical and cultural narratives.

Vinokur's film, *Unreal Estate*, is a playful, cinematic still-life of the old reading room in the South Library on Essex Road: an idle expanse of space above the books. A still shot of the room frames actions of mapping, mopping and breathing. Light skims the dirty milkshake pinks and greens of its architecture, the atmosphere shifts, wet reflections steadily dry and disappear, the room remains secluded and remote.

MICHELLE WILLIAMS GAMAKER: *Encore (Resurrection Manifestations)*

Michelle Williams Gamaker's work explores the fiction-making machine of twentieth century British and Hollywood studio films, by restaging elements from these productions to reveal their cinematic construction. As part of this, she recasts non-white characters as 'brown protagonists' to propose alternative endings that counter their often doom-laden plight.

An usherette dressed in a grey velvet bellboy-style jacket and matching trousers lies asleep. Her hands clutch a black usherette tray, on which rests a pyramid of green popcorn... With a nod to David Lean's 1945 film *Blithe Spirit*, which also conjured ghosts using innovative green make-up and lighting effects, Williams Gamaker sets her film in the palatial, ghostly art deco ex-cinema in Essex Road. Here, a lowly usherette brings two Hollywood starlets back to life with her glowing green popcorn.

*Michelle Williams Gamaker is represented by Tintype, London*

**For further information, please contact Albany Arts Communications:**

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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.

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