**Consumed: Stilled Lives Exhibition**

*Consumed: Stilled Lives* plays with the traditional concept of still-life painting, which grew in popularity in the 16th and 17th centuries. Often featuring silver plates, ornate glassware and expensive foodstuffs such as shellfish and exotic fruit, still life paintings became a fashionable way for the Dutch and Flemish to illustrate their wealth. When interpreted using emblematic symbolism the paintings represent a conflicting relation with material wealth. In response to this reading Woolley produces still-life objects that suggest contradictory relationships to contemporary consumer culture. Drawing on both definitions of the term ‘consume’ (to ingest and to purchase) she uses food still-life photography to represent different characters and positions in relation to capitalist society. What we eat and how we eat are symbols of our wider consumer habits. We are what we consume.

In addition to photographs and installation this exhibition presents a series of still life objects installed in vitrines. The Celebrate installations suggest the conviviality of a feast but the materials used to make the food disrupt this reading. The objects were produced in response to research into the visualisation of food in eating disorders. Food is imagined to be drained of colour and aroma to help suppress desire. The food is inedible, eradicating its value as food. In the white installation (objects produced in 2012 with supported by a training grant from the Arts Council of Wales), the food is made of the same porcelain as the containers, raising the food to the status of a crafted and delicate object. The grey party food is made of concrete, a common, inexpensive material. The black banquet is made from plastic, material that will not break-down, it is indigestible. The different materials evoke the shifting status of food in the lives of eating disorder sufferers, in turn object of disgust and obsession.

Two new installations ‘Barmecide Feast’ devised for the exhibition at Blyth Gallery, are named after Barmecide, a prince in Arabian Nights. Barmecide invites a beggar to a feast, but serves only imaginary food. The beggar plays along, acting as though he were intoxicated by the imaginary wine and hitting the host during a drunken brawl. Eventually the beggar is rewarded with real food. The Barmecide feast has become a name for situations, in which promises are made but not delivered and acts of generosity that are no more than illusions. In the installations the illusion of plenitude and extravagance is undermined by the material of the food. The overabundance of newspaper headlines are intended to leave an unpleasant taste in the mouth, and invoke ideas of food insecurity.
Celebrate Installations
Barmecide Feast Installation
Artworks
Celebrate 2012-15
Lure 2014
Pacifier 2014
Hysterical Selfies 2015
Wish Book 2015
Memorials 2016
Relics 2017
Barmecide Feast 2018

Exhibition
Consumed: Stilled Lives (solo exhibition) Blyth Gallery, Imperial College, London, 26th September – 2nd November 2018

Workshops
Relics Art Club workshop, Consumed: Stilled Lives exhibition, Blyth Gallery, Imperial College London. 24th October 2018

Exhibition Invitation

Dawn Woolley
Consumed: Stilled Lives
Private View: Tues 2nd Oct, 6-8pm

Blyth Gallery, Level 5, Sherfield Building
Imperial College London
South Kensington, SW7 2AZ
Wed 26 Sept - Fri 2 Nov, 9am - 9pm
Exhibition shows shocking side of consumption

‘Consumer: Stilled Lives’ goes on show at Imperial College London

Extraordinary, and at times shocking, still life images connecting the consumer and the act of consuming will go on show in South Kensington next month.

The exhibition, at Imperial College London’s Blyth Gallery, runs from Wednesday, 26 September until Friday, 2 November and showcases the work of Dr Dawn Woolley.

Woolley is a visual artist who uses photography, video, installation, performance and sound. Last year she beat over 14,000 entries to win the #SAATCHISELFIE competition.

Titled “Consumed: Stilled Lives”, the exhibition plays with the traditional concept of still life painting, which grew in popularity in the 16th and 17th centuries. Often featuring silver plates, ornate glassware and expensive foodstuffs such as shellfish and exotic fruit, still life paintings became a fashionable way for the Dutch and Flemish to illustrate their wealth.

Dr Woolley, a research fellow at Leeds Arts University, said: “The term ‘consume’ describes the act of eating as well as purchasing a commodity. The still life table expresses this dual meaning because the objects on display are edible and indicate an individual’s social position.

“I therefore approach the still life table as a portrait of a particular type of consumer. This allows me to view food in a still life as an expression of a relation between an individual and consumer society, and a symbol of the effect commodity consumption has on the consumer’s body.”
The exhibition comprises of six series of mounted and framed still life photographs and online projects on Instagram and Twitter.

And some photographs, such as the Memorials series, are not for the faint-hearted. Dr Woolley added: “Memorials are neither still life nor portrait but represent the subject becoming nature morte. Rotting flesh is arranged among the paraphernalia of celebration, signalling the end of the consumer party.”

“Consumed: Stilled Lives” runs from 26 September until 2 November at the Blyth Gallery at Imperial College London’s South Kensington campus. The private view is on Tuesday 2 October from 6pm – 8pm. The exhibition is open to the public, from 9am-9pm and entry is free. Further information is available here.

Ends

Notes to Editors

Dawn Woolley Biography

Recent academic publications include ‘Aberrant consumers: Selfies and fat admiration websites’ Fat Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Body Weight and Society, 6(2). Her forthcoming book Consuming the Body: Capitalism, Social Media
and Commodity is due to be published in 2019 by I B Tauris. Woolley is a research fellow at Leeds Arts University.

mobile phone: +44 (0) 7790 015 340
email: dawn.woolley@network.rca.ac.uk
website: www.dawnwoolley.com

Exhibition and research kindly supported by Leeds Arts University

Celebrate (Blancmange Dentata 2), 2012, 2 50cm x 62cm [Photograph in walnut tray frame]

Relic (20), 2017, 40cm x 30cm [Photograph mounted on mdf]
Exhibition Leaflet

Consumed: Stilled Lives plays with the traditional concept of still-life painting, which grew in popularity in the 16th and 17th centuries. Often featuring silver plates, ornate plates, and expensive foodstuffs such as shellfish and exotic fruits, still-life paintings became a fashionable way for the Dutch and Flemish to illustrate their wealth. When interpreted using emblematic symbolism, the paintings represent a conflicting relation with material wealth. In response to this reading, Woolley produces still-life objects that suggest contradictory relationships to contemporary consumer culture. Drawing on both definitions of the term 'consumes' (to ingest and to purchase), she uses food still-life photography to represent different characters and positions in relation to capitalist society. What we eat and how we eat are symbols of our wider consumer habits. We are what we consume.

In Woolley’s artwork, photography is both subject and medium. She produces photographs in response to advertising imagery. Her research examines the relation between people and objects, and the impact that adverts have as producers and disseminators of social values. Her central argument is that commodity culture turns everything into adverts, from still-life paintings to selfies. Alongside her exhibition works, Woolley makes site-specific works for her commercial advertising spaces on billboards and social networking sites in order to intervene in commercial visual culture and interrupt the repetitive order of consumption.

Consumed: Stilled Lives was first presented as the practical element of Woolley’s PhD by Project G (Consumed: Stilled Lives and the Pathologies of Capitalism) in the Dyson Gallery at the Royal College of Art. Her forthcoming publication Consuming the Body: Capitalism, Social Media and Commodification is due to be published in 2019 by I.B Tauris.

Biography


Dawn Woolley
1. Relics
Reminiscence of devotional artifacts and ceremonial figures such as totems, native sculptures, and animist figures. These relics can be seen as both a connection to the past and an attempt to understand and revere the origins of human belief systems.

2. Memori
Blackboards form a structured arrangement among the paraphernalia of celebration, signifying the end of the consumer cycle and the beginning of the repurposing or revalorization of the body and its intangible, organic form. The relics of a memorial and the relics of the photographic object are fashioned against the gallery wall, set up by two defaced billboards.

3. Ceramica (installation)
The installations suggest the nostalgia of a form that the materials used to make the food disrupt the existing. The objects were produced by the interaction of the visual representation of food in eating disorder. Food is generated to be filled with colour and energy to help suppress desires. The food is mobile, allowing its visual as food in the visual representation, the visual representation of the food in the container, and the visual representation of the food in the container of a visual and edible object. The grey party food is made of concrete, a common, inexpensive material. The black banquet is plastic; a material that will not dissipate, it is indestructible. The different material references the food in the lives of eating disorders and in turn object of disgust and obsession.

4. Pasticceria
Overseas, it is imprinted by the lenses, test-tubes and not afraid of a drama. The mixture of the dense, dense and dense, dense food is the material of what is called plastic. The body, set up into a plastic and organic form. To exist the idea of a memorial is a test object: the photographs are installed lying against the gallery wall, set up by two defaced billboards.

5. Ceramica (installation)
The installations suggest nostalgia of a form that the materials used to make the food disrupt the existing. The objects were produced by the interaction of the visual representation of food in eating disorder. Food is generated to be filled with colour and energy to help suppress desires. The food is mobile, allowing its visual as food in the visual representation, the visual representation of the food in the container, and the visual representation of the food in the container of a visual and edible object. The grey party food is made of concrete, a common, inexpensive material. The black banquet is plastic; a material that will not dissipate, it is indestructible. The different material references the food in the lives of eating disorders and in turn object of disgust and obsession.

6. Bermudicca (installation)
These objects are revisited after Bermudicca, a person in AsianWALES, who moves a flag to a flag, but saves only marginal food. The slogan plays: “and of the food.” In this installation the illusion of prominence and extraordinariness is undermined by the material of the food. Bermudicca mainly talks about the food.
Installation Photographs
Workshop Outline

The Social Value of Things: Relics Workshop

Materials and Equipment:
Digital SLR and tripod, black paper / material (photo backdrop), a range of packaging and objects, glue guns, scissors, pens, wire, double-sided tape etc., stapler, string etc.

Dissemination of outcomes:
The photographs will be shared on Instagram. If funding is available the photographs could also be printed as advertising posters / billboards and / or shown on screens / posters around the campus.

Participants will be asked to collect packaging and objects to bring to the workshop (some packaging will also be provided). The workshop will begin with a brief discussion about still life and vanitas, in relation to the Relics series and anthropological objects, the environment and sustainability. Participants will work alone or in groups of two or three to create ‘relics’. They could take the form of 3-D objects, or 2-D collage / collagraph images made using different textured packaging. The objects / images will be photographed and disseminated via Instagram and other social networking sites. Participants will be asked to come up with suitable hashtags to describe their objects. If funding is available some of the photographs could be reproduced on a poster/s to be displayed in commercial advertising spaces in the city. The Lure poster will be shown as inspiration.

The aim of the workshop is to increase knowledge in relation to consumer habits and sustainability will developing 3-D and 2-D creative skills. It is hoped participants will also begin to critically interpret brands, packaging, and advertising texts.
Lure Poster, 2014, 100cm x 150cm, Cardiff

Relics, 2017, 30cm x 40cm.
Workshop Sculptures and Social Media Posts
consumer_relics #consumer #relic by @lindacaine @blyth_arts
#deepinsideahearthofgold heartofgold #recycling #wasteproducts #wastepackaging #pollution #trash #treasure #recycledart #recycledsculpture

mandygamsu Dawn is your exhibition still on and where if YES? THANKS MANDY

consumer_relics @mandygamsu hi, no unfortunately the exhibition at Blyth

7 likes
November 20

Add a comment...

consumer_relics

consumer_relics #consumer #relics by @reiven ts @blyth_arts #love #sculpture #silveranniversary #nowmuchcanaharttakein #anniversary #celebration #silverheart #recycling #silverlining #recycledart #recycledsculpture

3 likes
November 12

Add a comment...