every thought there ever was
every thought there ever was

A new work commissioned with a Large Grant Award from the Wellcome Institute

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Biography

Lindsay Seers works and lives in London and Sheerness-on-Sea. She studied at two of Britain's most prestigious art colleges Slade School of Fine Art, University College London (BA Hons, Sculpture and Media 1991-94) and at Goldsmiths College, University of London (MA Fine Art 1999-2001), she has also worked as a lecturer and external examiner at The Slade and is currently a lecturer in MA Fine Art Goldsmiths. Her works are in a number of public and private collections including Tate collection, Arts Council collection, Artangel collection and the collection of MONA, Tasmania. She has won several prestigious grants and awards these include the Sharjah Art Foundation Production Award, UAE; Le Jeu de Paume production award for the Toulouse Festival, France; the Paul Hamlyn Award; and the Derek Jarman Award for innovative film makers; she has received a substantial AHRC award and awards from Henry Moore Foundation and a number of Arts Council and British Council Awards in support of her large works. She also received the Wingate Scholarship from The British School at Rome 2007/8.

Seers has shown internationally in museums and art centres such as SMK (National Gallery of Denmark); MONA (Tasmania); Hayward Gallery (London); Tate Britain (London); Kiasma (Helsinki); Bonners Konsthall, (Sweden) and Venice Biennale.

To experience Seers' work is to experience snapshots, rumours, doubtful information – fascinating fragments that refuse to add up to a neat, narratively satisfying whole. To experience one's memory of her work is something else entirely. Recall Extramission 6 on a Monday morning, and it's a story of childhood and exile. Recall it on a Tuesday night, and it's a meditation on Platonic optics and 19th-century methods of indexing and surveillance. Memory does its work, generating different readings, different histories, and different shapes for the viewer's future self to adopt. Tom Morton (Frieze 2009)

What constitutes the artistic practice of Lindsay Seers is not mere storytelling, but a matrix where there is no formal separation between the conceptual investigation of the act of photography, the camera as apparatus, the common desire for film and photography to act as evidence of events, and the complex historical and personal synchronicities of events themselves. What we are witnessing is not so much a detached systematic outline of these relationships, but the actual unfolding of a creative process, where the act of observation and understanding influences the outcome of events themselves. Through Seers' photographic explorations the past is constantly reconfigured, as if it contains an infinite virtual potential for different outcomes, which are all already embedded in one another. Instead of providing a neutral platform for the viewer, her installations place the film imagery within the structures most appropriate to the narrative constructs. These structures are both factual and theatrical, thereby embodying the dual aspect of the evidence and the artefact. It is impossible for the viewer to enter this emotional landscape without making their own identifications and associations, without being an implicated participant within the unfolding of history, its apparatuses and institutions as well as its human narratives. The personal and the collective are all but different features of the monstrous unfolding of the virtual event, a spectacle with no singular platform of observation.
previous works
In order to make clear the artist’s working methods four projects of eight of Seers’ episodic works are briefly described below.

‘Extramission’, was developed from a number of performative events:
- The work evolved across time taking the concept human camera as its starting point.
- A journey to Mauritius to find a house with the artist’s mother (which they never found).
- Performances on location in Holland and Mauritius using the mouth as a camera.
- Ventriloquist performances in theatres in Leicester, Blackpool and London.
- Performances as a projector at Ealing Studios.

Chris Frith informed the project with Bayesian theory and introception.

The work took personal biography and used it as an embodied experience of photography’s development into film. The work was staged in a model of Edison’s first film studio (Black Maria) as a temple to his Kinetograph. Funded by Arts Council London Arts and Humanities Research Council

Produced by Gas Works (London); Smart Project Space (Amsterdam); Tate Britain; Bonniers Kunsthalle (Stockholm); Kiasma (Finland); Contemporary Art Society and Victoria and Albert Museum for Rugby City Art Gallery; Images Festival, Toronto.

One of Many
The commission evolved as a search into interlinked historical and contemporary events surrounding the venue L’Hôtel-Dieu Saint-Jacques. Performances and actions formed an archive. These included searching for Black Madonnas on the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrimage walk in France and Spain; finding 3000 scallop shells; delving into city archives in Toulouse regarding a flood in the building; the biography of two French protagonists with two differently coloured eyes; the ‘all seeing eye’ and the Masonic influence in Toulouse. The work took the form of a confessional divided between the priest – the virtual; and the penitent – the actual. Lens based images pervaded the penitent’s narrative and digital animation the priest’s perspective.

Produced by Toulouse Festival, Matt’s Gallery and Lindsay Seers.
It has to be this way
The work comprised of performative actions, which constituted a search to relive the past.

Framed around a re-enactments of Seers’ step-sister’s biography the work involved using a method based on Neo-Platonic philosophy.

The narrative related to this philosophical/alchemical system evolved through the stringing together of moments chosen by the chance finding of dead bees. Content included the life of Queen Christina of Sweden (the subject of Seers’ step-sister’s PhD and her obsession). It was shot on location in Rome, Stockholm and Bologna. Four writers of biographies of Queen Christina based in Sweden were also involved in the project. The work has two parts – one originally commissioned by Matt’s Gallery and then also produced by Fact Liverpool; Nikolaj Art Centre, Copenhagen; Cricoteka, Warsaw; Aspex, Portsmouth.

A new commission saw part two produced by SMK (National Gallery of Denmark) with The Baltic and Mead Gallery as co-commissioners.

The work included large-scale sculptural elements, three monitor works and a novella reworked for each venue.
Nowhere Less Now

This episodic work is based on a photograph of a relative with heterochromia (an able seaman on Royal Naval ship). The image unfurls across time and location, the final version ends in Oman. The method took the typical process of searching for narrative by re-enacting, acting and travelling to significant places. The work was not defined in advance of the commission except that it would be in the Tin Tabernacle. The original work evolved over a two year period and was produced by Artangel.

Matt’s Gallery assisted production for its four manifestations.
previous works

Extramission 2

Monocular 4

Monocular 1

previous works
every thought there ever was
Description of the new work

‘Every Thought There Ever Was’ is a moving-image installation to be staged in a constructed space (seating bank and light traps) over three moving projection screens, they are robotically controlled, tilting to receive and reject imagery, patterns and colours.

The work requires blackout with low level LED lighting to allow ease of access to a seating bank. The sound is delivered by both directional speakers for voices and through 7.1 surround sound. The work will be 20 minutes in duration and play twice an hour on a timed system.

The imagery that is projected onto the screens concerns human consciousness and its relationship to artificial intelligence. The coming together and breaking apart of conscious perceptions of the world and the self is a recurring motif for Seers’ artwork. The piece reflects these shifting, fluctuating natures of our perceptions of reality.

The work draws on philosophical ideas and contemporary scientific findings. A particular focus is on current and historical perceptions/representations of conditions defined by extraordinary brain functioning, in literature, philosophy and science. The light that neuroscientific study shines on the elusive, variable nature of consciousness in general is an important element of the research for the work.

The work has evolved from a number of collaborations.

At the Sackler Centre for Consciousness Science, Professor Anil Seth examines the effect of exposure to virtual reality on our sense of self, our perception of our body and our experience of subjective ‘reality’. Work at the Sackler Centre is focused on unravelling the biological basis of consciousness itself.

Taking ideas of robot consciousness into account the screens move in the space and seem to react to sound, light and ideas. Images fall on them and across them. Doubling, (often present in Seers’ works) emerges on the three screens. They screens, like a skin stand as a membrane between inner and outer data. The implication of a computational brain/a robot brain is also part of this doubling or reproducibility. The robot pictured in the film can learn and has specific individual qualities, although its mind comes from a common structure biological elements allow it subtle differences amongst the masses.
Robots

Beyond the presence of robots working as screens in this new work an avatar/robot is also featured in the film. This character (called James Miranda Barry) addresses the questions of its own consciousness through their thoughts/narration. (NB The historic Barry disguised herself as a man and served in the British Army in medical roles. No-one knew she was a woman until her death.)

The content/subject of Barry/narrative/story

There are three Barry characters in the work (relating to the three screens):

- The historic Barry, Inspector General of Hospitals disguises as a man,
- The child born of Barry’s Caesarean in South Africa and the generations that have taken the name JM Barry to this day
- The future avatar/robot of Barry

Historic Barry

Documents on Barry at the Wellcome Library indicate that it is not at all certain that Barry was female (although this has been a commonly held belief) – she/he may have been hermaphrodite. Her body was never seen by a medical professional.

As Inspector General of Hospitals one of his/her principle concerns was what were then referred to as ‘lunatic asylums’. Barry is reported to have had an unusually humanitarian approach to patients and understood that conditions were responsible for some of the mental states of these patients. Treatment took the form of punitive incarceration in cells where patients were beaten and chained.

Caesarean Barry

The designer of the Barry Avatars in the film traces the DNA line back to the baby cut from the womb and discovers many important facts that had been lost about belief and practices from that time.

Future Barry

She/he is set in a genderless future world that has been manufactured - a world beyond differentiation and beyond racial definitions, the avatar muses on what mistakes were made in the past before we understood the brain, consciousness and reproduction. The robotic screens are part of the Barry avatar - the screens are ‘characters’ in the work.
Fabrication details of screens

The 3 flat circular screens, 2 of which will be approx 2m in diameter and the central screen 3m in diameter. The side screens pan and move along a horizontal axis, always at the same height. The larger central screen moves up and down on a vertical access and backwards and forwards from a central fixed point. The screens are programmed to be synchronised in their movements. The wide angle, projectors will be fixed to the mechanism/screens for back projection.

In terms of imagery that the projectors will process there is a requirement for a good contrast ratio and significant luminosity as well as an ability to render movement smoothly. There will be patterns, symbols, insides of the body/brain, robotic mechanisms and lens based filmic and photographic imagery in this work in many forms. This will be projected onto these physically animated screens. The two brain hemispheres and their different ways of processing the same information is an influence on this work. Split brain studies have been very influential on medical science and understanding the brain.

Screen Movement List:

Left Screen:
1. Move 2.4m from a central position left and right in y co-ordinate.
2. Vertical rotation of screen 90 degrees inward, i.e front facing screen turns 90 degrees to z.
3. Move forward and back in z co-ordinate minimum 2.4m (potential 3.6m if possible)

Right screen mirrors left screen actions.

Left and right screen will eclipse one another. Therefore there needs to be a distance between them when intersecting to allow for the projector arm.

Back Screen
1. Rise in y co-ordinate from a 2m level to 2.4m (or potential for 3.6m)
2. Move forward in z co-ordinate
3. Tilt 90 degrees to a horizontal position (screen facing up in y co-ordinate).

Other requirements
A seating bank. A wall/barrier to block view of screens on entry into the gallery. A barrier to protect screen area.
More Detail on Methods and Concepts

The Philosophy of the practice and its relationship to neuroscience. The use of heterogeneity as a method. The integration of heterogeneity without juxtaposition in all aspects. The question of simultaneity as a creative method.

Lindsay Seers’ works evolve holistically so that every part emerges simultaneously. The work does not follow a method of scripting, visualising and enacting but takes a dynamic attitude towards events. This follows both the philosophy of Henri Bergson and the findings of neuroscience in relation to heterogeneity.

“For Bergson, we must understand the duration as a qualitative multiplicity — as opposed to a quantitative multiplicity. As the name suggests, a quantitative multiplicity enumerates things or states of consciousness by means of externalizing one from another in a homogeneous space. In contrast, a qualitative multiplicity consists in a temporal heterogeneity, in which “several conscious states are organized into a whole, permeate one another, and gradually gain a richer content” (Time and Free Will, p. 122). Bergson even insists that the word ‘several’ is inappropriate to qualitative multiplicity because it suggests numbering. In Time and Free Will, Bergson provides examples of a quantitative multiplicity; the example of a flock of sheep is perhaps the easiest to grasp (Time and Free Will, pp. 76–77). When we look at a flock of sheep, what we notice is that they all look alike. We sense no qualitative change as we move from one to another. We also notice that we can enumerate the sheep. We are able to enumerate them because each sheep is spatially separated from or juxtaposed to the others; in other words, each occupies a discernable spatial location. Therefore, quantitative multiplicities, as Bergson says, are homogeneous and spatial. Moreover, because a quantitative multiplicity is homogeneous, we can represent it with a symbol, for instance, a sum:25.

Normally, we would think that if there is heterogeneity, there has to be juxtaposition. But, in qualitative multiplicities, there is heterogeneity and no juxtaposition. Qualitative multiplicities are temporal; qualitative multiplicity defines the duration.” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

“Schizophrenia may not be a unitary concept and therefore might not apply to a single disease. Heterogeneity in clinical aspects can be accounted by the implication of different neural circuits and by psychosocial/pragmatic sources of noise. Since Kraepelin, schizophrenic clinical picture is supposed to spare consciousness, unlike other organic psychoses. But, what if schizophrenics and other psychotic patients have precisely a disturbed capacity to monitor and describe their mental states and thus their reported content of consciousness is partly or totally the expression of an altered consciousness, rather than a conscious report of alterations somewhere else? This idea was already postulated by French alienists...
and continued by Continental psychiatry but not by Anglo-Saxon one. Whereas the latter used a metaphor to describe consciousness as a torchlight that illuminates psychic life, the former envisaged consciousness as the part of the psychic apparatus concerned with experience. In the last decades, however, through the impact of recent neurocognitive research, consciousness has been paid heed again and its role in the psychopathology of different symptoms of schizophrenia (involving functions such as memory, agency, self, etc) has gained relevance. (Consciousness Disorders in Schizophrenia: a Forgotten Land for Psychopathology)

Hence the making of the work involves setting up heterogeneous methods and engagements of all parts from the outset. Each element of the work is modified and extended in relation to a flux of form and content. This has been a tried and tested methodology and has produced successful results.

This text by Ole Hagen elucidates this methodology:

What constitutes the artistic practice of Lindsay Seers is not mere storytelling, but a matrix where there is no formal separation between the conceptual investigation of the act of photography/filming, the camera as apparatus, the common desire for film and photography to act as evidence of events, and the complex historical and personal synchronicities of events themselves. What we are witnessing is not so much a detached systematic outline of these relationships, but the actual unfolding of a creative process, where the act of observation and understanding influences the outcome of events themselves. Through Seers' photographic explorations the past is constantly reconfigured, as if it contains an infinite virtual potential for different outcomes, which are all already embedded in one another. Instead of providing a neutral platform for the viewer, her installations place the film imagery within the structures most appropriate to the narrative constructs. These structures are both factual and theatrical, thereby embodying the dual aspect of the evidence and the artefact. It is impossible for the viewer to enter this emotional landscape without making their own identifications and associations, without being an implicated participant within the unfolding of history, its apparatuses and institutions as well as its human narratives. The personal and the collective are all but different features of the monstrous unfolding of the virtual event, a spectacle with no singular platform of observation.
The philosophical question of perception:
The question of breaking down the interiority of the subject and the seeming exteriority of the world has been long considered and made porous by philosophy but has in some senses remained stagnant in our experience of theatre and cinema – in which the sensation of the passive observation of an unfolding spectral world leaves us in an undeniably Cartesian space. Merleau-Ponty uses the term dehiscence, its use in biology refers to the splitting apart of fruit, seedpods or organs to bring forth a flesh, which differs from but is of their flesh. It is this collapse of an inner and outer dichotomy of the structure of mind that seems essential - to go beyond the binary.

There is an interiority or depth of being within flesh that comes to the surface in the chiasm, as an opening of the perceivable world. The arising of sense is a fleshing out of embodied existence, with flesh disclosing its (in)coherence or carnal meaning in its differentiation of itself.

Like Bergson, Merleau-Ponty draws on the sensation of a person’s hand touching the other hand as defining a kind of mobius strip of interiority and exteriority in which the sense of a continuous surface breaks down the dichotomy of subject and object. How to bring this collapse to the screen?

Anil Seth’s work questions how we know what is spatially and temporally real from what is imagined. Could we accept that everything is potentially equivalent in the perception of what is imagined and what is seen? Is it mere Cartesian thinking to divide time and space, (or form and content) up into what is spectral, and what is spatial and concrete. Given that real space time is always overlaid with virtual images (i.e. from our own past experiences) where are we then with reality and consciousness? Perhaps more specifically where are we with self-awareness and self-consciousness. The future will most probably find out, especially as more and more objects will have the semblance of a very basic consciousness - smart objects.

What is important about these concepts is that they meet science and how they find themselves realised ontologically and physically in space - that they find a narrative, an embodied form which evokes thought. The journey into the work evolves from these ideas – like a painter who tries to paint what is ineffable it is the act of doing it that brings it into existence and that is a struggle until the end.
every thought there ever was

previous seating bank
every thought there ever was
which there is no neat, satisfying resolution. Bound together with hints of the psycho-physiological, the paranormal and the occult. It’s a gripping matrix to These strange narratives of personal trauma and ancestral psychodrama wind their way through Seers’ work, mysteriously disappeared. stories tell of a step-sister, Christine, who suffered memory loss following a moped accident in Rome and then when she spoke for the first time at the age of eight, her photographic memory faded, the traumatic loss of Other consistent. Beginning with her upbringing on the island of Mauritius, we learn of the artist’s speechlessness as a child and the visage of a photographic memory so vivid it abrogated the need for the vocalisation of words. When she spoke for the first time at the age of eight, her photographic memory faded, the traumatic loss of or moving object captured by the camera and image as the relationship of the individual to her apparent surroundings, or as Bergson expressed it in Matter and Memory, ‘a system of images which I term my perception of the universe and which may be entirely altered by a very slight change in a certain privileged position - my body.’ For Seers the camera is a motivator, a method for living by. She begins work at 7am and finishes, usually, around midnight. ‘I’m spending all of my time with this stuff,’ she says, ‘so it becomes tired. The camera is at the heart of this artist’s personal ontology.’ To-date Seers’ work has focussed on the female side of her family tree. ‘Nowhere less Now’ makes the shift into the male side, taking as its departure point her father’s long career with the sea cadets that began in the 1940s and a family photograph of her great great uncle, George Edwards, taken aboard the HMS Kingfisher at the end of the nineteenth century. Research for the project has had the artist journeying to the archipelago of Zanzibar, the seat of East African witchcraft. Into the mix comes artist and occultist Mina Bergson, who was born on 28 February 1865. Mina Bergson and Lindsay Seers share a birthday, one hundred years apart, and both studied at the Slade. Bergson was the sister of Henri Bergson and wife of Samuel Mahlers who founded the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, one of the most influential organisations in the Western Mystery Tradition. ‘Nowhere less Now’ is also the first time that Seers will be projecting her stories into the future; a future, fascinatingly, in which the photographic image is no longer a legal entity.

This time with the support of the inventive team behind Artesangel, Seers’ idiosyncratic cocktail of photography, film, performance, animation and installation proves fascinating. As the elusive truths begin to slip simultaneously through the lens and the viewers’ metaphorical fingers, the deeper truths surfaces. ‘Nowhere Less Now’ is a goose-bump inducing aesthetic and intellectual roller coaster, from one of the most promising artists working in Britain today. If there’s one thing not to miss this year, it’s this.

Lindsay Seers: Nowhere Less Now runs 8 September - 21 October 2012

The Tin Tabernacle
12-16 Cambridge Avenue
Kilburn
London NW6 5BA

Open Wed - Sun

The key, I eventually realise, is to avoid getting drawn into overly simplistic debates relating to the credibility or otherwise of these curious overlapping stories, wildly tempting as that may at first be. There is no resolution to the narrative and the search to find one is pointless. What the viewer is being engaged in is a Brechtian theatrical event of a highly constructed nature, a performative maze with no exit, around which the inattentive viewer could meander for indefinite ages unaware that they are going nowhere. Which is a delicious metaphor for life. Nothing is as it seems.

Rather, the autobiographical is engaged by Seers as a trope, a stand-in for selfhood. The work is ontological, it is about being in the world. It is about you and it is about me, but it is not personal. In fact, the stories are largely irrelevant. They are about human experience, that’s all. As Seers puts it with a gentle smile, ‘any story would do.’ The important question is what effect these stories have on consciousness and on how we live our lives. And this question Seers addresses through an investigation of her, and our, relationship to image: as the still or moving object captured by the camera and image as the relationship of the individual to her apparent surroundings, or as Bergson expressed it in Matter and Memory, ‘a system of images which I term my perception of the universe and which may be entirely altered by a very slight change in a certain privileged position - my body.’

Artesangel are celebrated for many things, not least the ingenuity and eccentricity of their one-off locations: a council house in Elephant & Castle, a disused Fire Station, and the V&A’s reserve collection storage unit until it name a few. Their latest triumph, Lindsay Seers’ ‘Nowhere Less Now’, takes place in a nineteenth-century Grade II listed church just off the Kilburn High Road. The Tin Tabernacle, as it’s colloquially known, was built on a shoestring from corrugated iron in the 1890s. Its roof is now full of holes and rust seems to pour from every tumbledown wall. Even more extraordinarily, its interior was converted to take the form of a naval ship by the William & St Marylebone Sea Cadets when they originally took it as their home in 1947. As I wander around apace with awe at the peculiarity of it all, I’m reminded of Ms Seers’ words: ‘site-specificity,’ she told me with a nervous blink, ‘is highly problematic as an art form.’

Over the last few years Lindsay Seers has emerged as one of the most distinctive voices in the new generation of post-YBA British artists. Simultaneous with her first solo show at Matt’s Gallery ‘It has to be this Way’ in January 2008, her captivating immersive installation ‘Extramission 6 (Black Maria)’ was one of the highlights of the Tate Triennial, ‘Altermodern.’ This was followed by solo exhibitions at the BALTIC Gateshead, Mead Gallery Warwick, National Gallery of Denmark and Gallery TPW in Toronto, as well as the inventive team behind Artesangel, Seers’ idiosyncratic cocktail of photography, film, performance, animation and installation proves fascinating. As the elusive truths begin to slip simultaneously through the lens and the viewers’ metaphorical fingers, the deeper truths surfaces. ‘Nowhere Less Now’ is a goose-bump inducing aesthetic and intellectual roller coaster, from one of the most promising artists working in Britain today. If there’s one thing not to miss this year, it’s this.

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38
EXHIBITION
LINDSAY SEERS: NOWHERE ELSE NOW
The Tin Tabernacle, NW6
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
THEATER GATES: MY LABOR IS MY PROTEST
White Cube, SE1
★ ★ ★ ★
COUNTLESS corrugated iron churches—"tin tabernacles"—were built as the population soared in Victorian Britain. In Kilburn stands a rare surviving example, which is the unlikely setting for one of the most spellbinding shows of the year. With help from art commissioners Artes & Aranx, Lindsay Seers has occupied the former-looking former church, now the local sea cadets' HQ, with a breathtaking multimedia installation. The quirky interior, decked out like a ship, is a springboard for Seers's intricate story, beginning with her family's naval history. Shown on two screens, her video leads us on a journey that loops between past, present and future. Often dressed in seafaring garb, she traces the story of her great-great-uncle George, a naval officer in Zanzibar, but she also takes us into animated visions of a future where still photographs no longer exist. She draws in colonialism, witchcraft, free-masonry, the eye condition heterochromia and much else along the way. It is complex stuff but she pulls together her material deftly; I left the Tin Tabernacle feeling utterly exhilarated. Theater Gates, a Chicago-based artist, also weaves his personal history into broader themes. A fire truck greets you in White Cube's courtyard but it has been daubed with splats of tar. A video inside explains all—Gates's father was tarring roofs as the 1968 riots raged in Chicago, and fire hoses were intermittently turned on black civil rights demonstrators in Alabama in 1963. His father's work, he says, was a quiet protest.

Ship story: Lindsay Seers's exhilarating installation begins with her family's naval history.

All at sea on Kilburn High Road
The transformation of a quirky chapel into the setting for a disorienting film about a sailor has magical results

Rachel Cooke
Lindsey Seers: Nowhere Less Now
The Tin Tabernacle, London NW6 from Saturday and to 3/10

Last Thursday I had a small adventure, the kind of trip you can take when you need it. A group of us were attending a screening of a new short film, The Tin Tabernacle, by film director Lindsay Seers. It's a visually arresting piece, shot in a former church in Kilburn, a part of London I had never visited before. What struck me most was the way the film used the space. It's an old church, once part of the Tottenham Park estate, and it lends itself perfectly to the storytelling. The film's narrative concerns a sailor who goes to sea to escape his past, and it uses the church's architecture to explore themes of memory and identity. The sailor, played by a talented young actor, is dealing with the loss of his father, a fellow sailor, and the film captures the weight of that loss on his character. As the film progresses, the sailor's struggle becomes more apparent, and it's a testament to Seers's skill as a filmmaker that she manages to convey such complex emotions through such a simple story. The lighting in the film is particularly striking, with soft light filtering through the windows, creating a sense of mystery and unease. The camera work is also impressive, with tight shots and clever angles that keep the viewer engaged. Overall, I would highly recommend this film to anyone interested in the intersection of art and film. It's a unique and powerful piece of work, and it's clear that Seers has a bright future ahead.
Dream voyage on a ghost ship

Multimedia event mesmerises; teenage sociopath disturbs; Leonard Cohen seduces

**INSTALLATION**

**Lindsay Seers: Nowhere Less Now**

Richard Cork

Escaping from London’s traffic-torn Kilburn High Road, I walk down Cambridge Avenue towards one of the strangest buildings in the city. Although constructed as a chapel during the 1860s, this unassuming edifice now provides a home for the Wilberforce & St Marylebone Sea Cadets. But everyone in the neighbourhood calls it The Tin Tabernacle, and I can understand why. The whole building has been scattered in grim sheets of corrugated iron, so that it looks like the battered survivor of a war zone. But the Sea Cadets’ routine motto is inscribed on the front door: “Ready Aye Ready.” Announcing a pugilistic determination to sell off anywhere, it prepares me for the extraordinary journey on which visitors to The Tin Tabernacle can now embark.

Lindsay Seers was commissioned to produce Nowhere Less Now by Artangel, an organisation that encourages artists to present their most ambitious and unlikely projects in surprising locations, and she has transformed the interior of The Tin Tabernacle into an upturned ship. After entering the space and taking my seat on some hard wooden slats, I am greeted by the remains of a fighter and aircraft gun resting beside me. Putting on a headset, I realise that two enormous circular screens—one convex, the other concave—dominate my vision. The lights go down, and I soon proceed to unleash a multimedia assault on the force that uses sound, video, photography, performance and animation.

A voice announces: “I always felt like I was looking for nothing.” Someone else states that “the sea has a memory,” and that “the dead live with us.” The starting point for Seers’ epic expedition seems to have been her discovery that she was born precisely 100 years after the birth of her great-great uncle George Edwards, but nothing is as straightforward in this perpetually reverberating installation. She shows a photograph of Edwards taken on board a ship while he was serving with the British merchant navy in Zanzibar. He tried to liberate slaves, and ended up drowning. Some of the audio in subsequent images are black, and Seers ensures that they play significant roles in the photographic material, together with the animated figures on the move in a fast-changing African society.

She cannot, however, be pinned down to a single set of concerns. In one close-up shot, Edwards gazes towards the future with two different coloured eyes. Perhaps the two screens Seers uses in the memorial show reflect her belief that Edwards’ unusual ocular condition has something to do with his weird twin. His eyes were probably the starting point for many of the abstract images now appearing on the screens. Yet these forms are also redolent of planets suspended in the cosmos, and Seers plays with ideas of a world dashing restlessly between past, present and future.

At one crucial point she decides to visit Salisbury and find out more. Archives preserve there yield further photographs of the context that Edwards inhabited, and Seers shares them with us. Even so, Nowhere Less Now lives up to its confounding, disorientating title. The more she examines, the less she comprehends.

Eventually, reality and fantasy become as hard to separate as past and future. The vessel constructed here in The Tin Tabernacle grows more and more like a ghost ship. A voice intones, “It’s like the end of the world.” Quiet seconds before the lights are switched back on, the vapours from the chapel, I realise the piece has transmuted her multi-layered journey to haunt her audience like a marauding, uninterpretable dream.

**Details:**

Until October 31. www.artangel.org.uk

**The Observer**

Lindsay Seers

SEERS, 48, apparently uses her extraordinary life-story as the inspiration for her art. Watched from inside a replica of Thomas Edison’s first film studio, which was called Black Maria cabinet, her semi-auto-biographical and dream-like film...
IT HAS TO BE THIS WAY

At the ambitious mega-show called Alternative at Tate Britain in 2009, one work stood out. It was Lifestyle Queen’s video installation Work Make. Later that year, she wins the Derek Jarman Award and it came with a Channel 4 commission to make her short film for their Three Minute Wonder series, opening her work to a significantly wider audience. In these films, her work reworks and extends themes from previous works, such as Black Movie, and it has to be this way.

Alison Green, Source, Issue 79

Who is The Photographer?

The Photographic Review
Summer 2014 Issue 79 CI

Who is The Photographer?

State Magazine Alison Green, Source, Issue 79

It has to be this way

At the ambitious mega-show called Alternative at Tate Britain in 2009, one work stood out. It was Lifestyle Queen’s video installation Work Make. Later that year, she wins the Derek Jarman Award and it came with a Channel 4 commission to make her short film for their Three Minute Wonder series, opening her work to a significantly wider audience. In these films, her work reworks and extends themes from previous works, such as Black Movie, and it has to be this way.

ESPECIALLY as we find out that the boy is not just a boy
but a young man, with the subject of his body. Mr. Fisher’s
photography project was initially about the young man
wearing revealing costumes and shrouded in mystery
because he wanted to explore the relationship
between clothing and identity. His photographs are
inspired by the characteristics of his subjects.

SOURCE

Lifestyle Queen, James Nature by Tom King

Image credits: Lifestyle Queen, 11 June 2014

www.creativesol.co.uk
Hearing the Last Word

When I first learned about Lindsay Seers's work I was struck by a detail in her biography, that she didn't speak for the first eight years of her life. It seemed like an extraordinary throwback to a time when people could be more eccentric than they are now, or at least when differences weren't so quickly subjected to a logic of medicine or psychology. It also triggered a memory that, in retrospect I am sure I regularly forget: when I was a child there was a period of a whole year when I stopped talking. My parents attributed it to a bad school; in my mother's recuperative accounts, it was when she made a decision in favour of her child over the social pressure of keeping me there. For years afterwards I spoke very rarely, certainly infrequently in public. Until my twenties I would have described myself as shy. In the family lore, my silences were linked to a streak of independence rather than a trauma or disability. Along these same lines, at least here, I'm less interested in analyzing myself or Seers psychologically, and this would be a crucial error in the case of her work where fact and fiction are regularly mixed. But the question of exclusion and speech remains intriguing. It's a goal now to understand experience as fundamentally conditioned by language (via Lacan, for example), and writing and speech being performative rather than straightforwardly representational (via Barthes), but we also still conceive of things as being unspoken and unrepresentable, and Seers's work is often described in such terms.

To the work now before us: the series of photographs, *Two Differently Coloured Eyes*, 2013. These depict a long-standing theme in Seers's work, heterochromia, the rare condition of having eyes of different colours. In the photographs Seers depicts her subjects directly with even lighting and mostly abstract white backgrounds. Placed somewhere between factual and formal, these portraits show people confronting the camera with open eyes. It's all about the eyes and the faces that hold them. The framing Seers uses is straightforward compared with her usually elaborate scenarios, viewing apparatus, and the notable number of figures in her imagery that have their faces obscured or turned away. We might consider these pictures to be research, as she describes ideas for installations being 'needed' in photographs. They also recall to me, the memorable opening statement of Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida*: "I am looking at eyes that looked at the Emperor.' Eyes in this respect, along with the camera that takes their picture, are devices for recording. For Barthes they offer the possibility of time travel, a prevalent theme in

Seers's work. But what happens when you see them? Barthes doesn't say exactly - seeing the photographed eyes of a person who saw Napoleon is a pretext for a different memory trip, but so these people may be for Seers. I suspect they may be auditioning for a role in a future film.

Heterochromia apparently runs in Seers's family. It's woven into the storyline of installations from the last few years such as *Monasterie*, *One of Many*, *Northern Light*, *New Now*, and *Jungle* (2 Theatres). It has been a feature of particular characters in these works, such as her great-great uncle George or an unnamed Scandinavian man. It makes them stand out and seems to be an aid in certain narrative threads. Seers tells us that the condition is a result of the conjuring of two embryos at an early stage of gestation. While this is not strictly true (it's more often a result of a mutation) this fact steers us where Seers wishes us to go. Even more startlingly, she describes heterochromia as resulting from the absorption of a twin (again this is more suggestive than scientific). Heterochromia thus is a metaphor for a fundamental heterogeneity of identity, here made manifest - like a two-toned picture - on some people's faces. It also points to the field of gene research and what stories of diversity it can tell of race and migration, for example, as precipitated by the crossings of humans across globe in the past 500 years.

Eyes appear frequently in Seers's work, whether in the form of a pair of fish-shaped screens in various installations, stoppers, or a focus on seeing as a form of communication, as when Seers took pictures with a camera inside her mouth. Dodging is another theme, as with twins, sisters, characters who switch gender identity, and others who hold dualities. Seers's films are often split, sometimes representing different points of view of different characters or designed to be seen as pairs of images. She also controls the experience of her films such that you might be compelled to watch one from start to end sitting and wearing headphones or looking through a porthole. In one installation you watch with another person, but it turns out you're watching different films. These themes in Seers's work, and the disruptions and complexities they perform, put a critical pressure on ordinary types of representation.

She uses art to both retreat from common sense and frame insurgent questions about what makes meaning and how it can either I caught up in, or slip away from, attempts to render it sensible. But there is more to say, and I think it's worth going further. Aspects of Seers's work resonate strongly with some of the concerns of the thinker, Jacques Lacan. Rancière has explored in his 2007 book, *The Frame of the Image*. Rancière is known for...
postmodernist theories of signs, and in this book he reconsidered 'the image' through philosophy as brought to bear on a range of artistic forms, from exhibitions to films to novels to poetry. His thesis is that contemporary experience is marked by two working assumptions: firstly that reality is indeterminate and overwhelming, and secondly (paradoxically) that images are self-sufficient and self-referential. He sees these 'types' of images: ones that testify to something that happened, ones that assert their presence (as art usually), and ones that relate critically within a reflective understanding of sign-systems. It is instructive for a discussion of what Seers does in her work that he focuses on the fragment in nineteenth-century realist novels—such as by Gustave Flaubert—where meaning is released from an objective overview to disparate details. Rancière calls it the 'woundless immediacy of the visible'.

Charles Bovary's ugly but, for example, suggests the identity of its owner, but only suggests it. This, the silent speech of things, retains the power to signify but does so incompletely.

The fragmentation is a trope of modern art, but Rancière argues that it now functions across all representational forms including ones tasked with telling truths. What has become an 'aesthetic of incommensurability' contributes to a culture of not being able to think beyond representation. Taking the Holocaust as an example, Rancière makes a compelling reading of several accounts of that event in exhibitions, films and non-fiction.

The enormity of the violence and inhumanity is expressed across all these formats, through the telling of realistic details rather than describing the event itself. It is as if it needs to imitate art in order to proceed in the face of extreme shock. But Rancière aims to critique those who say 'it can't be represented', and show how in fact it is, albeit through various displacements. Those who say that inhumanity is beyond thought, he argues, wish to eliminate the original unspeakable responsible for the inhumanity. His ethics is to return dialectical thinking to what he calls the 'aesthetic regime of the fragment'.

What Rancière describes as 'symbolist mysteries' might well serve to elucidate what's at work for Seers: what might be at stake in...
her research, her stories and her installations. A mystery is 'a little theatrical misfire that manufactures analogy, which makes it possible to recognise the poet’s thought in the feet of a dancer, the fold of a stole, the sparkle of a chandelier, or the unexpected movement of a standing bear.' Rancière doesn’t reject the aesthetic of the fragmented, but wants to attend to the quality of how fragments together create provisional meanings - Rancière calls it ‘making something common’. Common meaning ‘provides the term of measurement for the incommensurables’. Returning to Seena’s new Eijffinger Colourful Light photographs, it’s worth discussing what they tell us or don’t tell us. They communicate little about genetics (the sample is too small) and little about the social or psychological experience of the individuals pictured (any ideas about an effect of a ‘vanished twin’ is our own projection). As I suggested before, they seem to be a casting call, or perhaps inspiration for a storyline. There is a play here, though, with how meaning is conveyed, and it recalls the distinction made by Allan Sekula in his great essay ‘The Body and the Archive’, between ‘narrative’ and ‘repressive’ images. Some of the rubbings in Seena’s photographs appear to be lying down. It’s an odd thing, isn’t it? But look: in one image this perspective makes the subject sees comically but another one lookslocal. What could be described here as Seena’s attention to the mechanics and changeability of representation, whether in detail or on the level of epic drama, is what makes her work so compelling. For one, it seems to collapse Sekula’s opposition (these aren’t mug shots and they’re not portraitss exactly), Seena seems to take us to a place where images can be signs and symbols, to the end of provoking thought about what they are and what they do.

Alison Green
Images courtesy of Matt's Gallery
In films that are dense, ungraspable networks of reference, Lindsay Seers comes close to displacing the experience of thought.

By Charlie Fox

Among the new astonishments collected at the Hayward Gallery’s 50th birthday show this winter was Lindsay Seers’s mind-blowing film Newborn Less New, by her in 1995. The exhibition’s slick rhetoric, about bringing together contemporary creativity from different platforms, resonates with the hallucinatory fragments of modernity. Seers’s film is a distillation of a particular location in mind, in that, for example, when one watches the cinema of neon lights, one sees only those distinctive elements that are most prominent in the particular environment. Seers’s film is in this sense a distillation of a particular location in mind.

In the second part of a new installation surveying film made in Britain over the last ten years, Newborn Less New is shown in a specially designed installation. The film is part of a large survey of contemporary film and video art, and it is shown in a specially designed installation. The installation is designed to highlight the film’s conceptual and formal elements, and it is shown in a specially designed installation. The installation is designed to highlight the film’s conceptual and formal elements, and it is shown in a specially designed installation.

The film consists of a sequence of images taken from the film’s soundtrack, and the installation is designed to highlight the film’s conceptual and formal elements, and it is shown in a specially designed installation. The installation is designed to highlight the film’s conceptual and formal elements, and it is shown in a specially designed installation.

Lindsay Seers’s recent works remain galvanically resistant to anything like full comprehension, even after multiple viewings.
Elizabeth Fullerton, Art News

Lindsay Seers, Lost House (Tina), 2011, a diptych from "The Lost Room" series. COURTESY THE ARTIST AND MATT'S GALLERY, LONDON.

I like to think of the audience member as one of the protagonists within the piece. By entering onto the stage, with them immersed, they become implicated somehow," she explains.

That collision in Seens poetic universe is vital to appreciating her work. Her vision of the world, influenced by the French philosopher and mystic Henri Bergson, is one of interconnectedness, buried reality and fantasy, and shifting concepts of self, time, and consciousness.

Chloe Hodge, Aesthetica

Digital Realities

Mirrormcy

A new group exhibition at the Hayward Gallery explores the dilemmas, consequences and realities of London in the digital age through a staggering array of multimedia art works.

"I believe in the power of images - less for their literal world view, but more for their capacity to disrupt, to imagine, to question the limits of our world, before we come to imagine new ones," she believes. I would encourage the viewer to explore "the new."

"The exhibition reflects the dynamism and "city and past aspect" of London's urban and social milieu. This is a place where imagination and creativity converge to create a new reality."

Lindsay Seers, Helenorochauh (Sound), 2013, a portrait from her series showing people with genetic Cassidism.

It is futile, then, to wonder if, as claimed in her work, Seens really was mute until she was eight, grew up in Mauritius, and had a step-sister named Christine who was missing after losing her memory in a moped accident. Autobiography becomes a vehicle for exploring authority, the unreliability of photography, memory, and perception as documentary reality, and the uncanny coexistence of existence. "I'm staging the pieces as full of artifacts but I want you to feel, like the artist, and so that the idea that the voices and the stories are really people's stories," she says. "Something of the flux between what is metaphor, what is real, and what is actual is where I think you're really interested in the work."

Elizabeth Fullerton is a freelance writer based in London. She is working on a history of BioArt to be published by Thames & Hudson.

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Chloe Hodge, Aesthetica

Carline and Matta Rensiwyse. The broad range of creative contributions made by these artists is extraordinary, and emphasizes the importance of their work in defining the boundaries of digital media and culture. Through their use of technology, they have created a new platform for artistic expression, allowing for a new level of interactivity and participation. The works presented here are not only beautiful, but also thought-provoking, challenging the audience to think critically about the role of technology in our lives.

The exhibition "Digital Identity" at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, explores the complex relationship between technology and identity. Through a series of interactive installations, the audience is invited to explore the ways in which technology is shaping our understanding of self and society.

Chloe Hodge
NEW YORK

“The Book Lovers”
The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts Project Space // January 26–March 9

Visual artists have long flirted with the written word: Consider the phenomena of the artist-as-critic, book-as-object, and document-as-artwork. In “The Book Lovers,” curators David Marotto and Joram Zisselka—an artist and art historian, respectively—define the “artist novel” as a distinct literary form. Far from a nostalgic meditation on the changing nature of publishing, this exploratory exhibition focuses the novel as a contemporary extension of social practice and research-based art. Compact and infinitely reproducible, the artist novel challenges traditional forms of visual “authorship” in the same manner that the printed multiple, video, and photography have done. But while the market has seen more or less abusively those forms, “The Book Lovers” asserts that the category of artist novel retains a slippery and controversial vibe for examination.

Marotto and Zisselka construct the exhibition around a growing body of evidence—a curated selection of more than 130 artist novels displayed on tables in the center of the space. This book collection, recently acquired by M HKA, in Antwerp, is available for personal readers may also consult an online database—an addition, though less seductive, option. The books range from a Novel, 1968, Andy Warhol’s transcript of his daily conversations, to recent narrative experiments like the science fiction novel Philip, 2007, collectively written by a group of eight artists, and curated by Pauline Eschbach. Spanning artistic generations and geographies, the archive contains books by authors like Yves Klein, Stewart Home, Sophie Calle, Pablo Helguera, and Marotto.

Eight installations by contemporary artist-authors fill the rest of the space. These works fall into roughly three subcategories: the novel as project documentation, research object, or complement to traditional art objects. Jill Magid’s Bonnington Tansky, 2019, and Julia Wehr’s Stisy Librarium, 2009, document performative practices that frame the author as a co-collaborator and co-composer, whereas the novel serves as an empowering tool to assert self-identification. A selection of prints accompanies Magid’s re-edition of her book In Transformation, the Dutch secret service as a commissioned artist. Wehr’s humorous collection of disregarded library books—some shot down to piles of dust—reflects the new life of the book collection as a commissioned artist. Liza Lichtenstein’s Looking for Handicaps, 2019, outlines began as a research-based investigation of offshore tax havens but has become a promise for staging scenarios in exhibition and book publishing. Marotto’s Untitled book, 2019, based on a series of interviews with artists, provides a creative backdrop to the creative process of the exhibition’s objects like Linder’s Sex in the Mirror, 2012, and Tom Gilleen’s Women’s Maps, 2010–13.

Rose Rosier’s project, a body of work attributed to the fictional Jewish Belgian prototypical Surrealist, was published in limited editions or at exorbitant prices. Rather than being an unscrupulous category, artist novels highlight the growing economic preeminence of artistic labor and the infallibility of the book object. At the moment of its obsolescence—a reflection all too familiar to art practice. Situated between the mass-produced object and high art work, the artist novel is neither easily assimilable to literary publishing houses or the machinations of art discourse—a difficult position.
Dream voyage on a ghost ship

Multimedia event mesmerises; teenage sociopath disturbs; Leonard Cohen seduces

**INSTALLATION**

**Lindsay Seers: Nowhere Less Now**
The Tin Tabernacle, London

**Richard Cork**

Escaping from London's traffic-torn Kilburn High Road, I walk down Cambridge Avenue towards one of the strangest buildings in the city. Although constructed as a chapel during the 1800s, this uncompromising edifice now provides a home for the Willows St Marylebone Sea Cadets. But everyone in the neighbourhood calls it The Tin Tabernacle, and I can understand why. The whole building has been sown in grizzly sheets of corrugated iron, so that it looks like the bettered survivor of a war zone. But the Sea Cadets' roasting mutton is embellished on the front door: 'Ready Aye Ready.' Announcing a gun-sho determinism to sail off anywhere, it prepares me for the extraordinary journey on which visitors to The Tin Tabernacle can now embark.

Lindsay Seers was commissioned to produce *Nowhere Less Now* by Artespel, an organisation that encourages artists to present their most ambitious and unlikely projects in surprising locations, and she has transformed the interior of The Tin Tabernacle into an upside-down ship. After entering the space and taking my seat on some hard wooden stairs, I am greeted by the remains of a Bofors anti-aircraft gun rearing beside me. Putting on a bucket, I realise that two enormous circular screens—one concave, the other convex—dominate my vision. The lights go down, and Seers proceeds to unleash a multimedia tour de force that uses sound, video, photography, performance and animation. A voice intones: 'I always felt like I was looking for something.' Someone else asserts that 'The sea has a memory,' and that 'The dead live with us.' The starting point for Seers' epic expedition seems to have been her discovery that she was born precisely 100 years after the birth of her great-great uncle George Edwards. But nothing is as straightforward in this perpetually unsettling installation. She shows a photograph of Edwards taken on board a ship while he was serving with the British merchant navy in Zanzibar. He tried to liberate slaves, and ended up drowning. Some of the sailors in subsequent images are black, and Seers ensures that they play significant roles in the photographic material, together with animated figures on the move in a fast-changing African society.

She cannot, however, be pinned down to a single set of concerns. In one close-up shot, Edwards gazes towards the future with two different coloured eyes. Perhaps the two screens Seers uses in this multimedia show reflect her belief that Edwards' unusual ocular condition has something to do with an unborn twin. His eyes were probably the starting point for many of the abstract images now appearing on the screens. Yet these forms are also redolent of planets suspended in the cosmos, and Seers plays with ideas of a world drifting rhythmically, past, present and future.

At one crucial point she decides to visit Zanzibar and find out more. Archives preserved there yield further photographs of the context that Edwards inhabited, and Seers shares them with us. Even so, *Nowhere Less Now* lives up to its confusing, disorientating title. The more she unreels, the less she comprehends.

Eventually, reality and fantasy become as hard to separate as past and future. The vessel constructed here in The Tin Tabernacle grows more and more like a ghost ship. A voice murmurs, 'It's like the end of the world.' Quiet descends before the lights are switched back on. Re-emerging from the chapel, I realise that Seers has dramatised her multi-layered journey to haunt her audience like a maelstrom, unforgettable dream.

*Until October 31. www.artespel.org.uk*
I started to gradually delve into the work of Lindsay Seers back in 2009, slowly peeling back the layers as they were elegantly unwrapped before my eyes. The title of the Black Maria: the human camera, her step-sister Christine's disappearance in 2001. Nothing ever adds up, the trajectories always skewed, history as fiction, or was that fiction as fact? I believe it all, and still do. Seers has forever imagined for the viewer a stream of references framed inside and out, playing gatekeeper to both the past and the future, un-solving in her wake the very structure of history. The tales interspersed with such bold clarity, the work is that of an artist that is so psychopathically linked to the design of history that we are unable to see if we're being played as fools or a delirium upon a remarkable ontological moment of the past.

Here in the enclaves of Kilburns, London within the dust of a falling-down grade E listed building which goes by the name of The Tin Tabernacle the story of Lindsay Seers begins again. Within the Tabernacle Seers has built an aptly named ship which works as part-performance / part-cinema, equipped with headphones for the viewers, two circular screens are set in the center of the main room; one flat and one spherical a potential ode to a lapse between a 'flat' and 'round' glitch in time. Nowhere Less Now is an Aताळेंg commissioned work: a site-specific investigation into the life and times of Seers' Great Great Uncle George Edwards and his mysteriously dressed wife Georgina.

It is the art of intimacy which Seers plays upon within her work, in essence abusing the trust made between artist and viewer by enabling such access to the details of her own history and family - highlighting the work as ever more personable especially in light of the audio narration which mainly spoken by a women that we can only presume to be Seers herself. The viewer is individually invited to bear witness to the unfolding of a remarkable encounter. We are told that in her possession Seers has a photograph, this documentation acts as a lynch for a project of time which Nowhere Less Now attempts to conduct. The image of George Edwards on board HMS Kingfisher acts as a unique insight which, up until now has remained in a brown envelope in Seers' possession. George a sailmaker by trade served on HMS Kingfisher from 1888 - 1891, the fact that Seers' own father worked as a radio operator for the Royal Navy brings the artist ever closer to her Great Great Uncle, the discovery of his birth date as the same as her own but 100 years prior makes the tale even more conspicuous. Born with heterochromia rendering him with different coloured pupils - this distinction and George's wife Georgina's frightening masonic outfit come to bear as visual moments which don't unite Seers to her ancestors but empty out the connection, rendering the past ever more abject and mysterious.

Upon this photographic encounter Seers leaves for Zanzibar, a place where George had been as part of his HMS Kingfisher tour liberating African slaves. The bewilderment notion of the tale spins on an axis of ritual and tradition, questions unanswered. Seers amongst her meticulous fancy comes face to face with the scowl of her Great Great Uncle emblazoned on a baobab tree on the island of Mvita 'C' and the word 'Kingfisher', this at first a dream becomes reality thus re-spinning the axis a-new.

As the investigation is laid out, the table of the present shifts, the map too large to be held by the structures enforced to keep it in place. Seers ideologies question how far we can account for the demands or confines of categorising something as past 'present' or indeed 'future'. A future voice breaks into the viewers headphones and side steps from the female narrative. Also called George - the sexes are neither male nor female, the voice speaks of a time when photography is extinct misanthropically reminding the viewer of the precious relationship we have to documentation. In one dimensions the voice talks Seers in her tracks and strips George Edwards and his wife of their mystique, in others the voice awakes them for their ability to still conduct the artist now from the graves of the past. Seers historical accounts are always illogical and opulent with knowledge, links of surprising connectivity reminding the viewer of the claustrophobia of the past, yet the viewer comes away feeling those aching gaps that only history and the unknown of the future can render, gaps which try as we may time will always control.
Spoonfed, Gioriana Riggioni

Gioriana Riggioni reviews a mind-bending, absorbing exhibition by Lindsay Seers who places her somewhere in the Never Ending Story.

Stories are bigger than humans. It is like the Hammer is in stories...When you are a part of a story, and you think of it that way, it's as if you are stepping outside of yourself when you hear it.

Metro

PARADOXICALLY, the narrative that emerges is meticulously recorded. Within the conceptual framework, this is a deliberate act of "keeping out of" and objectifying her own story, so that in every sense it comes to represent so much more than a historical document as it does a fictional tale. Where one ends and the other begins is anyone's guess, and depends on how much stock the viewer puts in the speculative strands of the story which are based on a series of uncertain and thoroughly absorbing coincidences.

Arriving, that is, because they weave in and out of the viewer's immediate reality, forming connections between the most far-fetched magical rituals, exotic bands, secret societies, and the very building the installation and the viewer inhabit. One has the notion of becoming part of something like the Never Ending Story, where a line of events, people, places and images whose connections to each other, which at first seems arbitrary, become inevitably part of an overarching fabric that encompasses all things, including you and me. From this context, Seers' story emerges as a strand that meanders freely through the fabric, painting to larger existential and ontological realities by its mere presence.

Aptly enough, the installation consists of a large part of lensed mounds on one over the other, one convex one concave, onto which the fragmented story which Seers 'steps out of' is projected. Tales of scuttling folk with strangely multicoloured eyes and a corrugated iron church in Zanzibar, strike out of the screen and onto the more than half a century old upside down hull of a ship that decorates the inside of the Tin Tabernacle another corrugated iron chapel, the presence of which in north London is an enigma as if it is undefined.

Equally un-lyric are the scientific theories that underlie some of these connections: The notion that 'historonichrom', the condition that causes a person to be born with eyes of different colours, can be caused by a strand of stilll DNA in the body absorbed during gestation when one fraternal twin fuse the other; seems like the stuff of science fiction, yet, as it happens, true.

So is the fact, one presumes, that the artist was led to some of the key evidence in her investigation by a fortune-teller who told her to visit one of a pair of islands near Zanzibar known as 'The Twins'.

A decidedly unique and immersive experience, 'Nowhere Less Now' challenges the sceptical mind to become open to the notion that human beings do not hold reality in the palms of their hands; that there are unseen machinations at large which only obfuscate conservatism and lack of perception prevent them from observing.

Nowhere Less Now at The Tin Tabernacle until 1st October

Eye-catching: Film is projected on two screens to give the impression of hanging mid-air in the gloom

ART

Lindsay Seers: Nowhere Less Now

FROM a high wire walk between two Glasgow tower blocks to a total re-conceptualisation of a massive 1984 miner's strike conflict: any project from Artangel, the organisation that enables artists to produce ambitious site-specific installations away from the confines of traditional galleries, is guaranteed to offer something special.

Up-and-coming British film artist Lindsay Seers, whose mysterious 'Nowhere Less Now' is the latest addition to the Artangel portfolio, agrees; 'Some of the best things I’ve seen have been produced by Artangel, she says.' Seers’ new piece invites us to enter Kilbarn’s hidden gym, The Tin Tabernacle, a prefabricated corrugated iron church that was erected in 1860 and decked out in naval regalia by long-term residents, the Sea Cadets, then further altered by Seers so the nave resembles the hull of an ornate ship.

Once inside, the audience dons headphones to watch a visual phantasmagoria that mingles vintage photos, abstract graphics, computer reconstructions and audio clips to tell a story inspired by Seers’ investigation into the life of her scuttling great uncle, leading us across the globe and through the past, present and into a projected future.

The film is projected on two globular screens, one concave and one convex, which seem to hang in mid-air through the gloom. Seers, who has previously created pieces based on other personal stories (such as the disappearance of her step-sister and her refusal to speak as a young child) explained the genesis of her complex, multi-layered narrative. ‘All my works tend to be part of an “uber work” and they spawn and grow from one another,’ she says. ‘This time I wanted to think about the male side of my family, because I’d already worked quite a lot with the female.’

She adds: ‘My use of autobiography is more like a trope – to do with subjectivity, the relationship between an individual history as opposed to a kind of global, total history. How do we fit into the huge matrix – we’re all trying to relate to the totality.’

Featuring maori costume, ritual sacrifice and uncanny coincidence, it becomes difficult to untopple the real from the invented in Seers’ film. However, this is again an ambiguity that Seers encourages audiences to embrace. ‘I don’t want to draw any distinction between fiction and fact,’ she says. ‘When you’re making a film you’re already in a world of the constructed, the created – so everything is true at everything is false.’

A piece better served by experience than explanation, ‘Nowhere Less Now’ turns a tin church in a Tartis-like portal to mind expansion: not bad for a build that was never intended to last.

Amy Draycott

Tomorrow until Oct 22, The Tin Tabernacle

www.artangel.org.uk
**Lindsay Seers** has made a sequel to *It Has to Be This Way*, her multifaceted 2009 work in which she investigated the strange circumstances surrounding the disappearance of a superstar named Christine, who vanished following a moped accident which resulted in an unusual form of amnesia. The sense that Christine is an enigma is further compounded by the fact that this chain of events is narrated in a film that forms the work's centerpiece, by Christine's anonymous lover. This new work, titled *It Has to Be This Way* (2010) – which, like its predecessor, comprises a film projected in a large-scale architectural installation, a series of documentary interviews and an essayistic book – apparently centres around Christine's obsessive academic research into the life of Queen Christina of Sweden, a much-mythologised monarch who reigned in the seventeenth century. Seers's follow-up investigations take her to modern-day Ghana, where she traces the country's colonial past under Christian's rule, a trip she undertakes while dressed in a version of the historic uniform that was worn by the then occupying infantry. The point-of-view footage, shot from a camera mounted in the helmet of this modernised outfit, edited together with still photography and overlaid with quasi-mystical animated symbols, is projected as a circular pool that the viewer looks down upon from a raised platform within the installation. It makes for beguiling viewing, in which one is immersed in Seers's narrative and simultaneously flummoxed by its supposedly biographical nature.

In the film, Seers seeks out the forts that testify to Ghana's subjugation under Queen Christina. Yet what appears at first to be some sort of abstract-travelogue-cum-history-doc is framed as a far more personal exercise when coupled with its two voiceovers, both spoken by the artist's mother, one while under hypnotic hypnosis. Opening lines of the composer's interview typify this somnolent personal monologue: "I was her mother, but she [Christine] never my daughter, and now she has gone missing I can only say that I never loved her.

Speaking about *It Has to Be This Way*, exhibited at Baltic, Gateshead (where it arrived after showings at the M res Gallery, Warwick, and the National Gallery of Denmark), Seers explains, "I wanted to go into a very personal narrative about my mother leaving us and going to live in West Africa. Leave your children is considered to be a very unnatural, traumatic thing to do, I wanted to offset that family trauma against Ghana colonial trauma."

This rather literal clash of the personal and universal is typical of the artist's work. "It's a desiccation of who one's past exists," she continues. "Does it exist in historical memory or personal memory? So, when walking around in Africa, thinking about my sister and her relations to my mother and mother's relationship to Africa. So the whole thing revels in time through time."

Significant in much of Seers's recent work is an emphonic formalism that offers a formalistic contrast which the viewer absorbs via a set of steps. As well as the obvi reference to the forts of the film, this construction foregrounds sensations of invasion and protection in the context of the view to what might be termed the skeletons in the Seers's closet. Ultimately the viewer is left in a curious position of the activity ("mourning the stage") and passivity ("a viewer of the act onscreen"). "It's an interplay between the power structures.
in a game that is being played out beyond their control. Their choices are driven by things external to them.”

Seers’s approach, both to storytelling and photography, is firmly wrapped up in the artist’s interest in and ongoing dissection of Henri Bergson – in particular his concepion, set out in Matter and Memory (1895), of the world as mere representation, and of the individual subject as some sort of discrete, mechanistic aggregate of representational images. It is a dense, metaphysical concept to describe, but the language used can just as happily be applied to the making of photographs. Seers has consistently sought to embody picture-taking as theatrical action. The artist most notably performs this Bergsonian vision of the individual as empty, mechanical processor when she uses her own body as a camera; when she encloses herself in a black sack, inserts light-sensitive photographic paper into her mouth, emerges briefly into daylight and uses her lips as aperture and shutter to make the exposure, before pulling the cloth – a makeshift darkroom – back over her head to develop the print. The result of all this is a work such as Lost Room (2003/2010), a diptych that juxtaposes a photograph of the artist’s hand captured in this way alongside a documentary image of its production. Seers’s mechanisation of the body is evident too in I Saw the Light (2009), which features a series of staged self-portraits depicting the artist with a projector mounted on her head. In placing the camera in her hat for the production of I Saw the Light, she says, “The act itself causes me to become a specific thing in relation to the medium of photography. It creates a theatrical shift in my personality.”

Unlike many an artist’s work, onto which theory is retrospectively grafted by critics and curators, Seers’s ongoing autobiographical practice – this multifaceted exploration of her life and family history – consciously deploys theory as an escape route from both normative historical constructs and family narratives. “I don’t think fact and fiction are useful definitions,” the artist explains. “It’s an ultimate question as to where ‘truth’ lies in these mediums. They [photography and film] are constantly producing their own truth.” Seers’s work seems to set up its own hierarchy in addition to the notion of empirical truth, while the narratives the artist weaves are presented as straight autobiography and historical documentary, there nonetheless remains nagging suspicions about their veracity. These are grievances Seers isn’t willing to be drawn on. “I think Bergson would say that truth and falsehood are differences in kind, not of degree. Fiction is not an inverse of fact; it’s another different things. In a sense you’d say all films, documentary or otherwise, are fiction, or all fact. One or the other, not both.”

Seer’s work demonstrates this point of view admirably. The fictions, if that’s what they are, are maintained beyond the framework of the formal artwork itself, insist upon in such arenas as the press release and the interview between artist and critic. This permeation of the boundaries between art and real life draws studious links between art as means of representation, and the Bergsonian understanding of the world as merely representational construct. For Seers this translates as an impossibility of separation between art making and life-living, in which the artist embodies both the work’s subject matter and its means of production, to captivating ambiguity.

Lindsay Seers: It Has to Be This Way is on view at the Baltic, Gateshead, through 12 June

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**Works**

(Order of Appearance)

Everything, 1997-2003

Co-commissioned by the Modern Institute of Contemporary Art, Glasgow and Art Fund, London

A Day to Be Normal, 2000

Co-commissioned by Modern Institute and National Gallery of Denmark

A Day to Be Normal, 2000

Co-commissioned by Modern Institute and National Gallery of Denmark

Lost Room, 2003/2004

Photograph, 40 x 24.5 cm

about

Courtesy the artist and Modern Institute, London
To experience Lindsay Seers’ work is to experience snapshots, rumours, doubtful information. This is not art that insists on its own inviolable truth.

before deciding to transform herself into a camera, throwing a black sack over her head, inserting a piece of light-sensitive paper into her mouth, emerging to make the exposure through the aperture of her lips, and then returning to the sack to develop it. The results of these operations are bloodstained, spitted, flecked and decisively amorphous images of the inside of Seers’ mouth, printed on small circles of paper that resemble common communion wafers. What’s been transmuted, here, is the cool machinations of the photographic process into something warmly biological. They also had the effect of peeling off those who knew her. As an artist she considers it was very difficult to have a solid relationship with her as a friend... her work was a confrontation.

Returning as an adult to Mauritius with her mother, Seers’ seduced by her childhood home—a place she could not remember, but felt was somehow associated with her. "The island, though, has undergone drastic change since she left it, and her mother is unable to identify the house in which they once lived, a fact that leads Seers to swap her attempt to become a camera for an attempt to become a projector. Influenced, perhaps, by Plato’s et formation theory of vision, in which the eye exists from the eyes illustrates objects, she strips a light to her forehead, and lets her brain fall on the world, a ‘healthy recipe’ as the art dealer has it, from the passivity and melancholy associated with being a camera. The film ends with an image of Seers’ eyes burning with white laminaire, as her mother’s visions begin, a little against hope, that ‘I would never do anything to her because of the period in her life’.

Although much of Extravasation 4 is filmed in the manner of a documentary, it constantly calls into question whether through the omission of information (the art dealer’s ever again, a simple whiff of smoke) is not a ‘psychosomatic’ practice. But rather the star of the 2016 film The Company of Women, an adaptation of a 1929 Angela Carter short story in which metamorphosis is heavily featured). Seers’ point is not to reject the past as it was, but rather to create a representation of somebody who, having lost a sense of the openness of time, space and everything they contain, attempts to recover it through the very act of representation. The double trauma of birth and the loss of edible memory are re-created, along with Peruvian fiancés, in the act of becoming a camera, a device that insists on the clearing of one thing from another, and is then seemingly raised by that of becoming a projector. If the eyes, as Plato has it, set fire to the world, then scarcely anything that burns, including the eyes themselves, are one and the same? I don’t know how much, if any, of Extravasation 4 reflects Seers’ annual level of experience told she really realises all it's asked? Did she ever set foot on Mauritius sand? But the film has a richness and a truth that far exceeds the image-making of the type practiced by Ferdinand Willems, the film’s historical precursor, in which the lens neither rendered the interior self, nor illuminated the world, but rather functioned as an instrument of separation and control.

Early in Willems’s novel, a story or the narrator, an architectural historiographer and childhood refugee to Wallace from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia in the process of disentangling his Jewish parents’ past, contemplates how little we can hold in mind, how everything is constantly haunting into oblivion with every extinguished lifetime; how the world is, as it were, dreamt itself, in that the history of everything and objects which themselves have no power of memory is never heard, never described or passed out. Seers’ recent exhibitions at Hat’s Gallery, London, "It has to be this way", took this dreaming as its subject, telling the tale of the memory loss and disappearance of the artist’s iconographic fiction-objects. Christine, a scholar and curator of the 19th-century Queen Charlotte of Denmark, through tango, possibly fictional archive material arranged into three films and a publication, edited by one M. Anthony Pecorrell, can (last seen, possibly fictional) individual who also contributed to Seers'
frieze

shall find that all moments of time have co-existed simultaneously, in which case none of what history tells us would be true, past events have not yet occurred but are waiting to do so at the moment we think of them, although that, of course, opens up the bleak prospect of ever-lasting misery and never-ending anguish'. Their different temporal origins flattened out on the plane of her hospital sheets, Christine's photos are always in play: The Empress, The Lovers, Death. Then, Now, Forever.

To experience Seers' work is to experience snapshots, rumours, doubtful information – fascinating fragments that refuse to add up to a neat, narratively satisfying whole. To experience one's memory of her work is something else entirely. Recall Extraversion 6 on a Monday morning, and it's a story of childhood and exile. Recall it on a Tuesday night, and it's a meditation on Platonic optics and 20th-century methods of indexing and surveillance. Memory does its work, generating different readings, different histories, and different shapes for the viewer's future self to adopt. This is not art that insists on its own inviolable truth. Seers deals the cards, and lets them fall where they may.

Tom Morton is a contributing editor of frieze, Curator at The Hayward Gallery, London, and co-curator of The British Art Show 7.

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