



Offline Is The New Luxury

Private View: 18:00 – 20:00, Thu 6 April 2017
 Exhibition Continues: 7 – 16 April 2017
 Open 11:00 – 17:00, Thu – Sun or by appointment

For her exhibition at Furtherfield Gallery, Alison Ballard presents *Offline Is The New Luxury* a collection of works exploring our relationship with technology and the Internet. When daily encounters are increasingly mediated by online technology, how is this affecting our experience of live-ness, presence, and time?

With live streaming, instant replays and video chat technologies, concepts of time, space, and distance, are changing. We ‘hang out’ together online, we ‘live chat’ with computer algorithms, watch cat videos over and over again and share world political events as they happen, ‘in real time.’ Contemporary Western culture has become now-centric. Social media offers more ways than ever to ‘go live’ meaning we no longer have to share our experiences with others in the past tense (a photograph we took on holiday or a video of the event we attended last week). Instead, we share our every

moment instantaneously in a continuously unfolding now.

The Narrator Is Present is an audio work with narrative ambiguity and a sinister underbelly. How can we distinguish fictional narrative from truth among the multitude of disembodied voices on the Internet? Who is it that is speaking to us and what do they want? Existing simultaneously in Furtherfield Gallery and online, the work also explores the dualistic experiences of the virtual and the physical, and the ways in which these two spaces contribute to a single reality.

In *Live Stream of Consciousness* Ballard asks; can the Internet be good for our health? Spending time in parks can improve mental and physical wellbeing by relieving stress, reducing depression, improving memory and cognitive function, and boosting creativity. Can the same mental and physical health benefits of visiting a park be achieved via meditation, online? Ballard attempts to find out with this 20-minute seated meditation, originally broadcast as a live stream from Chalkwell Park, Southend-on-Sea, in 2016. By displaying this work inside Furtherfield Gallery, the artist invites us to reflect upon the physical and mental health benefits that Finsbury Park brings to our day-to-day lives.

Through these works and more, Ballard reflects upon the current state of hyper-reality; the context-collapse of the real and unreal, the distinction between what is simulated and what seems ‘real’, and invites us to reconsider our view of reality.

EVENTS AND ONLINE

Online Live Stream of *The Narrator Is Present*

Available online during gallery opening times, from 6 April
<http://bit.ly/2mExQ0v>

The Narrator Is Present exists live; in the gallery, and online. Visit Furtherfield Gallery to be physically complicit in the work or watch online to be a distanced voyeur.

Online Exhibition Walkthrough with Ruth Catlow Co-Founder and Co-Director of Furtherfield

Available from 7 April 2017 on Alison Ballard's YouTube Channel, in 2D video and Google Cardboard via the YouTube App.
<http://bit.ly/2mExQ0v>

Also available to view in the Gallery. Please ask a member of staff.

Everyday Fiction / NetPark Open Day

11:00 - 16:00, Saturday 15 April 2017

Metal, Chalkwell Hall, Chalkwell Park, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SSO 8NB

A chance to experience Alison Ballard's geo-locative audio work *Everyday Fiction*; a heart-breaking story of loss, grief, and mental illness that explores the ambiguity between reality and fiction that we encounter in everyday life. Site-Specific to Chalkwell Park, it forges a relationship between the audio, the location, and your presence within it. A moving experience with content that some listeners may find challenging.

Just one of the many app-based experiences on offer as part of NetPark; a collection of site-specific digital artworks commissioned by Metal. Find out more on the NetPark website: <http://www.netpark.zone/artist-projects>

If you have a smart phone, we recommend downloading the App before your visit and connecting to the free NetPark WiFi upon your arrival, to improve your GPS signal.

Download for Apple iOS: <http://apple.co/2moPeWA>

Download for Android: <http://bit.ly/2mEFull>

Don't have a smart phone? That's OK, you can borrow an iPad from Metal on the day, free of charge.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Alison Ballard explores the ambiguity between fiction and reality, the real and unreal, and the known and the imagined, through temporal works of film, installation, audio, performance, and geo-locative technologies.

Derived from everyday experiences and observations, coupled with an interest in the dislocated relationship of image and sound, and phenomenology, she seeks to produce cross-disciplinary artworks that question our relationships with people, places, and objects, and the shifting meanings of time, presence, and liveness.

Alongside her practice, Alison is Associate Lecturer at Nottingham Trent University and a freelance producer in London and Nottingham. More information can be found on her website: <http://alisonballard.com/>

ABOUT FURTHERFIELD

Furtherfield was founded in 1997 by artists Marc Garrett and Ruth Catlow. Since then Furtherfield has created online and physical spaces and places for people to come together to address critical questions of art and technology on their own terms.

FURTHERFIELD GALLERY

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