Tran Script

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I: So, if you could just introduce yourself to the camera - who you are, what you do...

A: Space is something that I enjoy working with - it's quite a powerful indicator, within a work, of the artist's presence within something, and I think that is something that you can constantly be playing with as an artist - how present should we all be in our own work? How is our presence or absence either leading or misleading how a viewer is going to interpret something, or allowing them the space and breadth begin to fathom these things?

A: Yes, I can. Often, I like to work in a side-by-side format. I think that, if you are working with two surfaces directly next to one another, you can begin to allow those two works to converse as you establish them. Then it really becomes about the process of your own communication with those two seemingly separate but intrinsically linked spaces.

A: Well, i'm speaking to you from one of them and I don't really know at this point what is happening in the other side, that pretty much gets handled post-production.

A: I don't really think that any art or cultural object has a stability - that would be the antithesis of the entire condition of art.. [pauses to stop autocue, repeats sentence when seated again] I think that we deliberately make things that destabilise and contradict set conventions or set ideologies - otherwise they wouldn't be seen as art really, they would just be seen as the thing that they set out to look like in the first place.

A: Yes. But it's never my intention to show everything at once - i'll always try to show you bit-by-bit. There is a strong sense of separation between these two scenarios, yes, but actually it's about what happens when those separate elements converge and begin to converse with one another and form an entirely different reality to the one that you were perhaps expecting.

I really like handling work in a lo-fi manner. Mostly because I am not very technical. I don't really understand how these conventions are actually achieved technically - I'm never going to be very good at that, or have the patience. I'm far more interested in using the knowledge I already have to create something that looks like the thing it's meant to be.

[panning full frame shot of stills pinned up in the space - character in other side]

I think that the stills here show a presence - something has happened and shows a context to an empty stage.

People recognise when they are being parroted or parodied.. Especially artists. That's why they seem to find it either amusing or uncomfortable.

Do you think genuine characters really exist?

No, not really.

My decision not to perform in the space really comes from that - I want this space to be seen as a performative environment, with the absence of character actually offering a real weight of presence and anti-presence.

But what if you had someone who looks exactly like you to perform and to operate in the other side - what if they could exist on the other side of the film? Because I think that then becomes something else entirely and you could choreograph those individuals to respond to each other and work in tandem.

Maybe.. But why is that required? It spoils the artifice when you reveal everything to the point where you are smacking people around the face with it. I just think that reveals far too much intention. The space needs that lack of occupancy in order to be examined by the viewer. The unoccupied environment is still something that can be successfully choreographed.

I think that, because it comes across as that kind of performative environment, people expect something to be happening within it - but something will be happening within it, just not any kind of performance.

I'm not anti-performance, I'm just not the right person to see that through. I'm incredibly self-conscious and would struggle to hold my own in an environment like that - which is why I tend to shy away from being a focus in my own work.

Do you make art for yourself or for your most intelligent viewer?

I don't know if people will recognise all of the subtle nuances and various hints and tricks in this. I don't even know what half of them are about. I know that they reference something and are there for a reason, but I can't really articulate that right now and I don't know why I should.

I'm unpacking this as I work and finding out where I fit within it all - as the artist.

I'm not really sure right now.

It's busy, it's layered, it's complex. I don't know, I guess I grant my viewer permission to be confused by this. I am confused by this.

I'm proactively trying to create something - an environment, a persona, an existence, whilst directly referencing its creation and revealing its artifice.

I think, if you make work like this, you are falling into the preconception that people may place on you that you have some sort of razor-sharp intellect but, in truth, I can't keep up with the problems here; with the chaos that is happening.

It's not a case of not having confidence in the work, it's a case of being truthful. I'm trying to ascertain where she sits within all this - she's really set herself a task with something so ambitious.

[different screen/context] What is the problem with this?

The problem is that she needs to make it vaguer, at the moment, it's too specific - it's clearly not about her being a painter, or even an artist. She doesn't even need a name anymore - she just represents this plethora of assumed conventions and tropes. She represents the artist. She's becoming a fucking gimmick and that was always going to be the danger in producing work in this ilk.

This is problematic in the sense that I cannot figure out the divide and sometimes, I think you just need to paint a line down the centre and move on. Perhaps there doesn't need to be a divide between the two characters - perhaps that boundary can be undeniably blurred. This is what I love about Fraser's work - I mean she's just brilliant. Here she is, [holds up image of Andrea Fraser on an interview panel] participating in a seminar or open artist's forum, discussion thing. The public are watching her and anyone that knows anything about Fraser will be sitting there aware of the fact that her work is to critique the institution, the characters serving within it and the entire corporatization of its operation. Knowing this, it is impossible to sit and take her seriously in such a corporate institutional event. You can't help but assume that she is in character, even when she is appearing as 'herself'.

What is this scenario for?

This is the perfect stage to attempt to give these characters some sort of forum and locale.

Why is the ambiguity there - what are you trying to achieve with it? (what am I trying to achieve with it?)

The ambiguity is to withhold or, maybe if i'm honest, control the presence of character. It's become quite clear to me recently that I actually hate my character. She was only ever there to act as vehicle to address satire for me. She doesn't even need a name anymore, she's just separate from me - and I hope that's abundantly clear. I want there to be an interlacing of her and myself - I want to achieve this perfect harmony that is still a little muddled and confused. I want to be unsure as to where she ends and I begin.

What are you trying to do here?

I'm interested in the institution, the arts institution, the institution of the artist. The presence of persona. Of how to act, move, speak and what to be framed by. Of that presence infiltrating a work, or a viewer's recognising of work.

I want to create three spaces. The scenario, the context and the conversation.