

In Conversation (transcript)

Dominic Hawgood & Lucy Soutter

Fyvie Hall @ Westminster University
28th January 2020

Hannah Watson (TJ Boulting) 0:00

I'm delighted to introduce our speakers for tonight's event, Lucy Soutter and Dominic Hawgood. This is being held in conjunction with the exhibition at TJ Boulting, Casting Out the Self v3.1 that has been generously supported by the Arts Council. Just a few words about Lucy to start with, so Lucy is a photographer, critic and art historian. She's course leader of the photography MA at University of Westminster, and she has written extensively on contemporary art and photography, including the recent book 'Why Art Photography (2019)'. She met Dominic when she was his research tutor at the RCA in 2014, and Dominic I met when he won the British Journal of Photography International Photography Award in 2015 which was hosted at TJ Boulting... five years ago! Since then he's done several exciting things, including most recently the exhibition at Foam Fotografiemuseum, Amsterdam which is also part of this project which we are here to talk to you about tonight. So it's a pleasure to introduce them both, and enjoy the talk.

Lucy Soutter 1:14

Welcome, everybody to Fyvie Hall at the University of Westminster. In case any of you haven't been here before this, the site of the first Polytechnic in Britain and the first photography studio in the UK was on the roof of this building, and the first cinema was literally through that wall. The Lumiere Brothers came and showed the first movie in Britain, so we're in historic spot. But, we have a bunch of things to talk about tonight and I'm aware that some of you may not have seen the show, so we have to do a little bit of explaining about that. Also, some of you may not be that familiar with Dominic's practice as a whole, so what I'm trying to do is give you an introduction to his work and to the show, but also the larger body of work that the show is part of. So Dominic, just start out by talking a little bit about your journey into this body of work, and the sort of themes and ideas that have come through from your earlier practice into this body of work.

Dominic Hawgood 2:32

I started out along this trajectory into site-specific installation, about five years ago when I finished the RCA, but before that, I was very much more photography based, so I still had a preoccupation with realism and reconstructing things, and that was realised as portraiture, mostly, sometimes landscape. Everything was carefully produced and highly detailed, and unusual capture techniques started to appear in my practice which more cameras orientated at the time.

Lucy Soutter 3:41

Can we back up a little bit and talk about sort of realism in the 'Real' because if you say that you were interested in realism someone might imagine something quite different than what you were up to.

Dominic Hawgood 3:54

Yes sure. It was to do with moments, so how things felt real in staged scenarios, whether an interaction looked real, what you want helped you determine if it was. I was thinking about the viewer, participants, and who was orchestrating the constructed moment, and I started interrogating this idea of the 'Real' from all kinds of angles.

Lucy Soutter 4:32

... and you were interested in using moments with human beings at intense moments of heightened experience where they were almost beyond themselves.

Dominic Hawgood 4:45

Yes it always revolved around moments that were quite intense, but importantly I began to reconstruct how I felt about these moments, the feeling whilst observing, and that also carried over into this body of work.

Lucy Soutter 5:27

So how does that relate to the idea of reality or the Real?

Dominic Hawgood 5:35

At the heart of the work I'm reconstructing a personal feeling, and slowly I've moved into areas such as CGI that have enabled me to look at realism in whole new ways, to branch out. That has facilitated me moving away from photographing people and into more abstract ideas. It's the same topics, such as perception and construction, just re-imagined and playing out in very different ways.

Lucy Soutter 6:27

Also, maybe you could talk about your first experiments with CGI, because that transition might be illuminating.

Dominic Hawgood 6:43

Okay, well if we back up to my interests as an undergraduate, then the work by Tim Macmillan really caught my imagination. He pioneered 'Bullet Time' which was used in the Matrix, and was extending the photographic moment through the use of lens arrays, where a 360 degree ring of cameras pointing inwards towards subject were all triggered at the same time. As a postgraduate I was interested in David Claerbout and his use of 3d scanning. By scanning I'm referring to his use of Lidar, but also photogrammetry, which is using a camera to capture a scene and then using that photographic data to reconstruct a virtual version in 3d that looks real. Now I'm preoccupied with who I understand to be the real pioneers of photography, the professors and researchers, such as Paul Debevec, often working in institutions, and who are opening up areas such as VFX. These people understand how to make things feel the most real through a deep understanding of physics, light and optics. But within photography they're unknowns. When I was at the RCA I bridged the photography and 3d divide using photogrammetry, and from there I could start to render reality using lots of different processes. I drew upon my experience as a lighting tech and my interest in cameras, and that really helped to process along. What emerged I guess was an interest in image-based light capture.

Lucy Soutter 9:19

So the Foam show, again there was a sort of push and pull between the process and idea. Do you want to talk about that?... there were a number of rooms at that show?

Dominic Hawgood 9:36

I had 3 rooms and a hallway to present the show in, 200m square I think, so it was definitely a challenge. The show brought together about 3-4 years work as Casting Out the Self has been rolling on for a while now, gradually evolving. It started out as photography and then moved into CG, animation, installation, product design, and lighting design.

Lucy Soutter 10:40

I know what would be a good lead into thinking about this a bit more... Would you talk a little bit about your experience in doing pre-visualization of shows, because that's another strand that fed into this. I guess that started with your BJP show at TJ Boulting. Was that the first time you had done it in quite a realistic way?

Dominic Hawgood 11:09

Yeah, I mean, when I put on the first show with Hannah in 2015, I started to use 3d visualization to plan my exhibitions. These renders were pretty accurate, and they allowed me to be very precise in planning for the lighting, but also for the build more generally. It became a tool, a pre-visualization to start with but then also a visualization stage that was going on afterwards, and that became an art work in itself. A lot of time and attention went into the construction of these digital spaces as well, and these ideas transferred across into this project. In 'Casting Out the Self', there's this kind of play between what's real and it often uses virtual space, and that's because I'm talking about a digital world. When I say digital here I'm also referencing the psychedelic that I describe as digital experience, as the project revolves around an experience of smoking DMT and the sensation I had of being inside a computer. The construction of space, as well as objects, is very much to do with an exploration of digitalness. For my 2nd solo show in Ireland around 2016 rather than distributing documentation of the show I used renders and erased all the photographic documentation, and no one noticed. The visualisation of my work is now playing a far more important role with my practice. Foam actually cancelled my original solo show with them back in 2017, and having already planned the exhibition and started making works, I decided to go ahead on my own, and render the show instead. I used photographic references and measurements I had taken whilst in planning stages, and set about designed in CG art works that would function in the real world, some of which were just simulation, and others also existed as objects. The output was an animation that was shown as part of Brighton Digital Festival x British Science Festival, and which Foam picked up on and that persuaded them to reinstate the exhibition. For the current show at TJ Boulting I used a pre-visualisation before it had been made, and this documentation went to press completely unnoticed, meaning I could promote the content of the show prior to it existing. When I got around to building it, the show matched the renders, and then I go through a process of documenting everything, so there's this back and forth between making it in the real world.

Lucy Soutter 15:43

It's one of the things I love about your work, it is one of the things that's so original and strange as on the one hand, it has a sort of practical kind of promotional purpose, but it also makes this wonderful hole of mirrors between the actual and the virtual.

Dominic Hawgood 16:01

If you look at this slide of a kaleidoscope I rendered... I made it in the real world to ensure it functioned, then transferred it to the digital to bring the design forward, and this is an example of how this back and forth begins.

Lucy Soutter 16:36

So then the show at Foam, the thing that really struck me about it being in the various rooms in the actual space was how intense the physical experience of being there was, and after so much stuff happening on screen and in a sort of abstract digital realm, to actually have one's body in these rooms with these sounds and these lights, was a very intense and physiological embodied experience. So I was wondering what that was like for you when you actually got to be in the show when it was all done

Dominic Hawgood 17:21

It's definitely strange building the space and objects you have rendered beforehand. You know them very well, you've designed all the components, watched them being fabricated, you've seen a room from all angles many times with various virtual cameras. Then you're there whilst it's being constructed, and it's weird because it's just like being inside a render.

Lucy Soutter 17:57

And what about the feedback that people gave you? Were you surprised or pleased?

Dominic Hawgood 18:05

It's interesting to see how people react. For example in my present show at TJ Boulting people are spending a lot more time by the screens. I changed how these were installed from the Foam show, and the response was more positive and interactive... I couldn't have tested that in a render.

Lucy Soutter 18:56

Lets talk about how you're a very intensive researcher. I'm picking up a copy of the leaflet that accompanies the show, and lets us in a bit to thinking about some of your research. Can you tell us a bit about your research process and about your relationship to sort of revealing or not revealing or thinking about or not thinking about all the different things that are under the hood that have gone into this work.

Dominic Hawgood 19:21

Yeah, I mean, it's been it's been a problem trying to reveal how things being made because the products are normally quite slick. So they're quite finished and there's not really a way into seeing how things are being produced.

Lucy Soutter 19:41

But that's a good question, does there need to be? I mean Anish Kapoor and Jeff Koons are happy to make a shiny things that doesn't let anyone in.

Dominic Hawgood 19:51

I'm definitely process driven, and I'm very much interest in process, but it never gets shown so I'm wondering how to go about doing that. Process contributes to the largest part of my practice, and it's unseen, and for me it's the most interesting.

Lucy Soutter 20:22

For you the process is very important!

Dominic Hawgood 20:30

This time I've tried to resolve this issue, I produced a booklet. However, originally I wasn't actually going to show this installation, it was going to be an animation and video that would have described some of these processes and some of my interests as part of the artwork itself. I was positioning a new camera technology, which I had co-designed and co-developed, at the centre of the moving image work. This new camera system we had been working on all last year, it's a huge undertaking in itself.

Lucy Soutter 21:43

And is that still to come? Can we get to see at some point?

Dominic Hawgood 21:46

It'll be version 4 of Casting Out the Self

Lucy Soutter 21:51

Excellent, so then tell us about how do you choose which is the Foam pieces to show at TJ Boulting?

Dominic Hawgood 21:59

It was pairing objects with space, what fits in there physically, and what works with the architecture of the space. I was pretty keen to show only installation work and nothing photographic as up to now I've always shown photography, although it somewhat relates to photography.

Lucy Soutter 22:52

Well how so? May be you can elaborate?

Dominic Hawgood 22:57

The first room the light installation is to do with image-based light capture, objects that facilitate the capture of space for CG, such as spheres for HDRI. A lot of the artworks in Casting Out the Self shown at Foam were made using photography... the Buddha animation used photogrammetry statue and simulated an electron microscope, a lenticular was made using photos created by adapting normal mapping processes (a way of computing angular information in CG). The statue of the Buddha used in my light installation was 3d scanning and 3d printing... and that was made to look like a 2d projection on the wall.

Lucy Soutter 24:34

Did people get? What was the response to the Foam show, did reviewers kind of get what you were up to?

Dominic Hawgood 24:41

I think the response was good, people spent time trying to understand how these illusions were being made. It's interesting though, I feel people are spending more time in this show than the one 5 years ago with the photographic works.

Lucy Soutter 25:07

Oh, that's interesting wait say more about that.

Dominic Hawgood 25:12

The interaction is different...

Lucy Soutter 25:16

Have people been taking lots of selfies?

Dominic Hawgood 25:24

Actually not seflies, more photos of the space.

Lucy Soutter 25:32

So what is next?

Dominic Hawgood 25:40

Probably working on the camera rig and producing some of the animation. In the booklet you can see some of the animation I had planned, test renders of the objects... a lot of these have been produced just not rendered as a sequence. There's a whole load of stuff hasn't been released.

Lucy Soutter 26:14

Well is this partly because they're super, super labour intensive and computationally intensive. Will you say a little about that because it's changing over time showing, but it's still a huge issue.

Dominic Hawgood 26:27

It's always a battle as I don't have access to the necessary facilities for rendering, it means I must source extra funding. The level of detail I'm interested in creating does means I experience problems, and often create just small segments.

Lucy Soutter 27:11

Would you like to make a feature film?

Dominic Hawgood 27:19

A couple minutes of animation would be great!!

Lucy Soutter 27:26

So you haven't said much yet about the screens in the back room of the show at TJ Boulting?

Dominic Hawgood 27:46

I've been looking for ways to discuss, and bring together both psychedelic and digital worlds. I wanted you have an experience with something digital, which made you aware of your perceptual system, and alluded to a psychedelic state. I'm setting a scene essentially where you have to think about conscious states. In Foam I also did this but in a very different way, using a lenticular that appears to come alive as you move around it... that felt very psychedelic. The screens as more to do with understanding perception is an illusion and can be hacked, if you sit with your eyes closed in front of one, your visual field is filled with geometric patterns as the lights flicker at different frequencies.

Lucy Soutter 29:41

I think that's another big sort of set of themes to think about, because over the last few years your work has had these sort of intersecting bodies of imagery that people might not necessarily see as being connected. So there's sort artefacts that might have to do with shamanism or urban shamanism, and things to do with the props of CGI, and kind of advanced digital imaging, and some of the stuff around psychedelia and hallucinogenics. Can you talk a little bit about how these worlds come together?

Dominic Hawgood 30:27

The project as I mentioned is about the feeling of being inside a computer. What I have done is to look at capture processes that take the real world into the digital. As part of that I've looked at research coming out of places like USCICT Graphics Labs, at academic research papers that reveal the secrets of imaging. That's how I learned about CG and taught myself. Inside these papers are experiments, and precise documentation of setups; they often look like digital rituals. Objects are treated in a very specific way. I've also been interested in objects relating to psychedelic ceremonies, and have been using digital processes for to replicate them. The two areas of interest have really come together, and I've merged the ritual and ceremonial.

Lucy Soutter 32:25

The Buddha crosses over right?

Dominic Hawgood 32:33

The Buddha crosses over because it appears in altar arrangements I've seen, but also in important research papers. I was especially interested in Marc Levoy's late 90's paper about light fields that involves a Buddha figure, this is a great example because once the object has been replicated and released into the world the digital community picks it up. These objects become render standards, used to test lighting and materials upon, they proliferate and become an accepted and important items. The Buddha to me represents digital.

Lucy Soutter 33:58

We've been talking about altered digital states, but what about the state you get into when you're working this hard? When you're in depths of producing one of these animations or something, is there something meditative about it? Or is it just bloody hard work trying to create something that will produce this contemplative effect? I mean, how about the process for you because when you're in it, it goes on and on and on, right? I mean, it's hard-core.

Dominic Hawgood 34:45

It's a tricky relationship and prompts issues relating to mental health if you don't get the balance right. It's the headspace you're in, the time and detail that goes into making...

Lucy Soutter 35:06

But it keeps pulling you back to do something that intense.

Dominic Hawgood 35:15

It's just fascinating, how these things work. I can't imagine what it must be like working in areas like this all the time? I've been making physical objects more recently to get a healthier balance.

Lucy Soutter 36:02

So we should we open up to some questions because I bet there are some?

Audience Member 36:17

Having spent so much time pre-visualizing stuff in CG, when you actually come to the space itself, and it's physically there. I was just wondering what surprises you might have, and what experience you have from physical spaces that is different from a pre-visualized space. Sometimes do you go into those spaces and you think, I wish I had that Buddha three inches to the left, but I've pre-visualised it now. Are you that strict with yourself?

Dominic Hawgood 36:42

I mean, renders pretty much match the spaces, and I've got to the point that the pre-visualisations have been done so I don't have to change anything. I will move something if needs be, but that shouldn't be the case. In the case of Foam most things were build off site, and it was 'simply' the case of putting it together.

Unknown Speaker 36:43

Were they surprised at Foam about how precise you were?

Dominic Hawgood 36:43

Yes, it was highly unusual for them. I did a lot of problem solving, considered all the components and designed everything. It's a weird feeling sure.

Audience Member 37:27

Yeah

Dominic Hawgood 37:44

I mean I can test things in my studio, but you can't simulate everything, and some illusions are only seen for the first time at the point of installation. This feeling of seeing visualisations creates an uncanny feeling.

Hannah Watson (TJ Boulting) 38:11

Well I know my gallery space really well and every artist does something different. So when I first met Dominic and he came to look at the gallery, he noticed things that I never even looked at. He noticed wires, light switches, all sorts of things, which I never thought about. Now fast forward 5 years and he's still detailed orientated... I remember hearing you talk the other day about the blue lights you used in the show, and how it transforms the space, how it's like retouching the physical space just using the light. Maybe say a few things about your use of blue?

Dominic Hawgood 39:07

The quality of light is something, which is underestimated by a lot of people, and how it affects things. An example might be going into a fancy shop and trying on some clothes, but the architects haven't thought the lighting. You're looking at nice clothes, but the quality of light renders the materials incorrectly, but also makes your skin look terrible. It could be possible the light is deficient in certain areas of the spectrum, so materials don't respond correctly and you and the clothes look weird. They're making you look ugly. You can exploit these kinds of effects to your advantage if you know a bit about them, and in the case of my show I

made the room feel more clinical and clean. I used a narrow bandwidth RGB LEDs that were missing the white component, and actually if you wanted to replicate daylight you might also need Cyan, Amber and Magenta on top of that. Anyway, I was using a lot of Blue, so straight away I've lost a huge amount of the spectrum, and I know LED's spike across it, so the materials in the room lose detail and don't react correctly. If you then think about your eyes, the rods are sensitive to blue so you can make out form well but a quirk of these cells is that the image itself appears soft. In low light we also desaturate colours, and with a mono frequency light this is accentuated because of the way the cone cells respond to that bandwidth. The result is a clear image, slightly soft, blue, but that also has desaturation in parts. The rooms feels surreal... it's been retouched in the real world.

Lucy Soutter 43:01

Talking about lighting and lighting, will you talk about the self-portrait that comes up from time to time in your slides, the test image of you and why you look so disturbingly darkened?

Dominic Hawgood 43:15

Well, the image was shot using the camera right I designed, and it separates light out in a scientific way, in-camera. This can be done using video or stills, and allows you to see the world in a way in a different way. It renders the world as metal.

Lucy Soutter 43:52

So there are layers and layers of content going on in your work in an ideal world would you have a viewer get all the different strands, or are you happy for different audiences to be picking up on different aspects of it?

Dominic Hawgood 44:04

I'm happy for people not to know, but interestingly I bet they pick up on effects immediately even without knowing why. My black and white images looks conventional but something isn't right, there's no way to achieve that look without an intervention. In this kind of example I'm using specularly to suggest to the viewer a kind of otherness. It's subtle but it's present and it works.

Audience Member 44:34

Looking thinking about your kaleidoscope and the 3d image it generates inside. How many mirrors did it take to create that illusion?

Dominic Hawgood 44:49

Not many actually, it's quite simple but you have to perfectly calculate the angles of the mirror. In the animation you saw I installed the kaleidoscope into the virtual gallery wall, and on either side is a room. The far room and all it's contents appear in the mirror that acts like a synthetic lens array that surveys space. It's like looking through a lot of different lenses at different angles, I find this very interesting.

Audience Member 45:08

It's nice that with so few surfaces you create such a complex form.

Audience Member 45:45

I'm super interested in the sort of media aspect, which is really interesting at the moment. It was a couple of years ago I saw you speak, and the pace of which the technological change is moving faster than I expected. How do you manage that pace of development in terms of your practice and keep on top of it?... the fact that 3d scanning is becoming quite ubiquitous. Is it a threat?

Dominic Hawgood 47:15

The thing about stuff like 3d scanning is that it is getting easier to produce very high quality scans, that's expected to happen. However very good scans require techniques and approaches that need deep

understanding of techniques, lenses, cameras, lighting, and ingenious ways around software limitations to force results. You need a certain way of thinking about the world, and that then is transferred onto anything else you work on, and that is something that sets you apart. That's a special quality you have that other don't.

Lucy Soutter 48:42

What is something that's so unique about your situation is that you're neither trying to make the perfect computer image that has nothing to do with the world, nor are you trying to make the perfect image from the world, you're back and forth kind of hacking the real world and hacking the digital world to mine a kind of affective experiential zone that's really very much yours so there aren't there aren't too many other people working in this area are there?

Dominic Hawgood 49:21

Not practicing artists, but I would probably look towards digital studios and companies.

Lucy Soutter 49:40

But thereafter it is just for a look right or a style rather than ideas or experiences or I guess they're... what about Olafur Eliasson, are you at all interested in that kind of studio?

Dominic Hawgood 50:00

Yes I am interested in that kind of studio, it's interesting how ideas from nature and science are being adapted into experiments that then become artworks. In fact at the recent Tate show he also exhibits a kaleidoscope which does precisely they same as mine.

Audience Member 51:04

You talked about the idea of being inside a computer, how is it that you visualise that, what kind of aesthetic value does it have, is it like code or being in a game?

I see it nearer VR, but I'm looking at the quality of the visuals. I was struck with DMT by its otherness, the feeling of another dimension, the strange perspective that felt mathematical, the presence of geometry, the clarity, the lack of noise, and the colour gamut. It all felt very digital, pure digitalness.

Does that stem from an interest in the ways games are made or the way that someone like Lawrence Lek produces a world.

Dominic Hawgood 52:26

I don't have much of an interest in gaming, it's more to do with the science of imaging that assists the replication of reality in something like a game that draws me to this stuff... also thinking about perception. It's more back end of the production rather than the worlds being created, and with Lawrence Lek he's more interested in worlds and narrative and less so in realism.

Audience Member 53:12

I have a question about switching back and forth between worlds. Does it affect you personally to come back to the real world, and do you start seeing more like 3d... the surfaces and points?

Dominic Hawgood 53:56

Yeah, I think it definitely affects you, and you start seeing things differently. The temptation is to analyse and take things apart, and working in different spaces is destabilising. I was just listening to professor Donald Hoffman talk about is new 'Interface Theory', and he clearly mentions that thinking about the world in a certain way over many years has changed how he perceives it. At the moment I'm researching a lot about perception and how we construct the world in our minds, and when you in addition work a lot with 3d space, things get weird!

Audience Member 55:11

If you if you come into the room, when you look at it do you feel like a viewer or a creator?

Lucy Soutter 55:31

(Laughing) No, no, no I'm laughing because I'm trying to get my head around this.

Audience Member 55:38

I'm trying to see inside his head.

Dominic Hawgood 55:39

I definitely deconstruct space in my mind, think about surfaces, textures, form, and also strategy for capturing... it's all part of having an interest in these kinds of things.

Lucy Soutter 56:09

That question reminds me of your MA thesis essay, which was called the 'Therapeutic Real'. You were partly looking at the novel 'Remainder', and looking at this question or re-enactment and reconstruction of something? What can it do in relation to trauma? may be say a little bit about that, and if any of those ideas fit with the more recent work?

Dominic Hawgood 56:52

Remainder was an obsessional look at reconstruction, from all sorts of different angles, and the subtleties of how that affected experience. There's a lot in there about thinking about the world from different perspectives. In my thesis I was looking into the impact that very controlled and almost staged scenarios within documentary type films were having upon the participants. I found that the structure itself was necessary for generating the real experience, it gave space for the moment to happen. I was thinking of examples like Joshua Oppenheimer's 'Act of Killing' or Gillian Wearing's 'Self Made'.

Lucy Soutter 58:33

This is part of my question, is there are coming to terms happening in this work and if so, what's the coming to terms, is it with the conditions of the digital age, or is it a coming to terms that might be more personal for you?

Dominic Hawgood 58:49

I come to realise that all these topics are I explore are very personal. For a long time I thought they were quite abstract, but actually it's to do with feelings, and probing ideas I want answered or I need to come to terms with. I think it's no coincidence I'm exploring the mind, the therapeutic, how we see reality, and themes like belief. I'm interested in the therapeutic use of psychedelics because I find them healing in my own person journey, so these themes are personal in many ways. Making the artwork gives me the excuse to research and discuss these topics.

Audience Member 59:46

Do you think you'd categorize that as a kind of visual phenomenology, because the outcome of the work is like very much a direct expression of your own enquiry, rather than the outcomes of the enquiry? I think that's really interesting aspect that you reveal.

Dominic Hawgood 1:00:19

There is a kind of phenomenology mixed in a guess. I think there is also something that happens when you experience the work, and that is both a product of my own enquiry and the outcome of that enquiry.

Audience Member 1:00:55

Your work seems to visualise quite a few interesting things, such as digital concerns, a culturally digital condition. I was interested in what you were saying about hacking perception, and I was interested in

whether in your work do you see you see the likelihood that you might further pursue exploring innately qualitative digitality?

Dominic Hawgood 1:01:45

The fascinating thing about many digital technologies is that it's build around the viewer and out perception system. It loops back to the viewer e.g. screens are calibrated to your eyes, and when you look further back to CRT monitors and the legacy of certain gamma curves all this is further revealed. I became very interested in research by Charles Poynton because of this, but going back to your question... very careful treatment of digital data has some pretty interesting results, and that can be brought out through process. Presenting very high quality renders of 3d scans in a particular way on a screen, and adds in interaction, and you gets very interesting bodily response. It feels very digital, perfect and real. Just thinking about digitalness and experience, that Jon Rafman at Zabłudowicz Collection was very interesting as it paired the sensation of touch with screens, I liked that a lot.

Lucy Soutter 1:07:55

There's so little work that engages actively with the digital, so last year for UNSEEN festival for their magazine, asked me to write a piece about the digital and contemporary photography, photographic art. And they sent me the list of the hundred artists who were showing that here at MC. I hadn't quite thought this through when I accepted this commission. So I had to look up these hundred artists and try and figure out what about their work was digital, and there were like four of them whose work I mean some either some of them shot their pictures with digital cameras, but in a way that didn't engage in any meaningful interesting way with the digital, and the three or four of them that had ever done any work with 3d scanning, or 3d printing, had done it in the most sort of superficial and kind of retro ways, and often to make something that referred back to the past two... I don't know, medieval architecture or something, and there was hardly anybody whose work was kind of addressing. That's one of the reasons why I've had such an enduring fascination with your work and keep bugging you and asking you what are you up to? Because they're just, I mean, I know there are some there are a couple of galleries that engage with digital practices that aren't necessarily, you know, and obviously, there are interesting things happening digitally that have nothing to do with photography, per se, and that aren't necessarily so fixated on the lens based image. But it's just one of the reasons that like to me your investigation has been one of the ones that's the most sustained in terms of thinking about what are these digital tools, what are they allow us to do and why should we care, like what do they mean? What are they about?

Dominic Hawgood 1:10:06

People don't care very much, but actually people just generally don't know anything about techniques, let alone where they're coming from. So it's about education is some regards, I mean I can't think of anyone more important than Paul Debevec in his use and application of advanced photographic procedures.

Lucy Soutter 1:11:00

At the Royal Photographic Society Awards this year they gave an award to a guy and I can't even embarrassing when I can't remember his name. But his lab invented the algorithm that is in everybody's phones so that when they're streaming a video, it doesn't break up, you know. So it's just like any video you've ever watched on your phone has been processed through this guy's algorithm. So it's like this guy's research could just so incredibly, practically important. Like every single person that sits in this room has experienced his work. And without realizing it without knowing without it occurring to them that anyone would have had to invent that. But I think that's part of it. Because so many digital tools are about erasing the traces of labour, and making something seem perfect the way I'm going to teach century realist painting is perfect, you know, the sort of photo realistic surface that makes it seem like nothing has been touched or created or transported or networked in an actual physical way

Dominic Hawgood 1:12:14

Yes I think my example of Charles Poynton earlier would also be an example of this. He created Rec. 709 amongst other things.

Lucy Soutter 1:13:31

I was interested in the visibility of labour, and the images that keep flashing up on your slides. Are these illustrations of the process?

Dominic Hawgood 1:13:42

These slides are showing the behind the scenes of my work, but are also part of the making process too. You might see annotations for example, and these points to technical or conceptual issues I may need to address. I screen grab throughout my process, so there you can see me building a flower, and to do that I built and designed a capture rig, in another slides I'm calibrating a camera system.

Audience Member 1:16:32

So often we don't have access to this kind of information so it's very interesting to see.

Dominic Hawgood 1:16:40

Yes I'm interested in revealing process.

Lucy Soutter 1:18:36

Is there anything that you would like to mention that hasn't been talked about?

Dominic Hawgood 1:19:00

No, thank you!