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Friends' Meeting House
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Manchester, M2 5NS

Rowena Harris: The Third Hand Prosthesis

30 October - 28 November 2015 (Preview: Thursday 29 October 18:00 - 21:00)

"I imagine that I am wiggling them, and am amused that they are wiggling alone in the ether. For I do feel and have felt them. Noticing the tendons in my wrist flexing, my joints bending and the wind rushing through my fingers and across my skin. All without the hand being. Yes. A phantom limb it must be like, albeit not painful, and instead, all over my absent body. I fancy that my dislocated parts are there somewhere, and this sensation will not be the memory within my nerves, that were smarted upon a severing of my limbs from, and indeed my body."¹

The Third Hand Prosthesis presents a new body of work by Rowena Harris encompassing installation, sculpture, and audio.

In The Third Hand Prosthesis Harris continues her investigation into a conception of the physical body as split into parts; a rupture which supplants the idea that the corporeal is a concrete entity, an autonomous, whole structure. The exhibition's title, The Third Hand Prosthesis, points at the lack of distinction between the virtual and the real in the way our experiences are constructed.

The "Third Hand" is an extraneous body part that the screen lacerates. An analogous experience that post-amputation patients may encounter is the "Mirror-Box", a type of therapy which aims to visualise the "phantom" limb in its original attachment to the body, and thus relieve pain. The use of smart phone photography has an equivalent purpose as an instrument able to train perception - at the moment when the Instagram photographer's thumb or finger, by accident, partially covers the camera lens which produces a photograph. Here the screen serves to amputate this body part as it visualises it both on and within the screen.

Fractured, multiplied and distributed through time and space (2015) encompasses white and grey concrete and plaster fingers which Harris scatters across the space whose skin tone leeches into the floor.

Fingers scrolling fingers scrolling fingers scrolling fingers (2015) comprises of a simple aluminium rod whose contortion alludes to the shape of a frame. It dissects an image from Harris' collection of Instagram images and unites these two viewpoints in conversation - the act of framing via digital means and physical means.

Becoming somewhat aware of my digitopalmer complex (2015) includes 3D printed steel hand bones which are copies of an anonymous person's MRI scan. The bones' scale and structure reveal the protean nature of the online location which Harris used to source the data; with its pervasion via online channels, networks, people, and software, the data source evinces its own immaterial nature and the continuous mutation of the person's once exact copy. Placed next to the same hand in video animation, Harris plays with the sensory memory of a complete hand and one in a state of displacement.

Walking around looking for my soul (2015) is an audio work which includes a pile of cushions that simultaneously place the viewer's own body as part of the exhibition as they sit and listen to the narrative on cordless headphones. The narrator's voice recounts a story in which her "soul" or "self" is lost upon the realisation that her body parts are split apart and float aimlessly in the ether. The work invokes Hito Steyerl's idea of "free-fall" - a contemporary symptom of sensory disorientation - which Steyerl outlines in *In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective*, as well as Michel Serres' notion, in *The Five Senses*, that our conception of the self and the world is informed by sensory perception.

Rowena Harris (MFA Fine Art, Goldsmiths College, 2010) lives and works in London. Her solo exhibitions include: *Being both on and within, as I said* (2015), The Gallery Apart, Rome; and *P.A.R.T.S* (2013), Coleman Project Space, London. Group exhibitions include: *The Place of the Scene* (2015), Bloc Projects, Sheffield; *Conversation Piece | Part 1* (2015), Fondazione Memmo, Rome; *Artist Screenings* (2015), KARST, Plymouth; *Chronoviser: Archive* (2014), South Kiosk, London; *The Open Cube* (2013), The White Cube, London; *Cold Compress* (2012), Drei Gallery, Cologne; *No More Icons* (2012), Rod Barton, London; and *Bloomberg New Contemporaries* (2010), A Foundation, Liverpool and ICA, London. Harris received the Sainsbury's Scholarship in Sculpture at British School at Rome (2014 - 2015).

¹Excerpt from Audio work "Walking around looking for my soul, 2015" - Rowena Harris