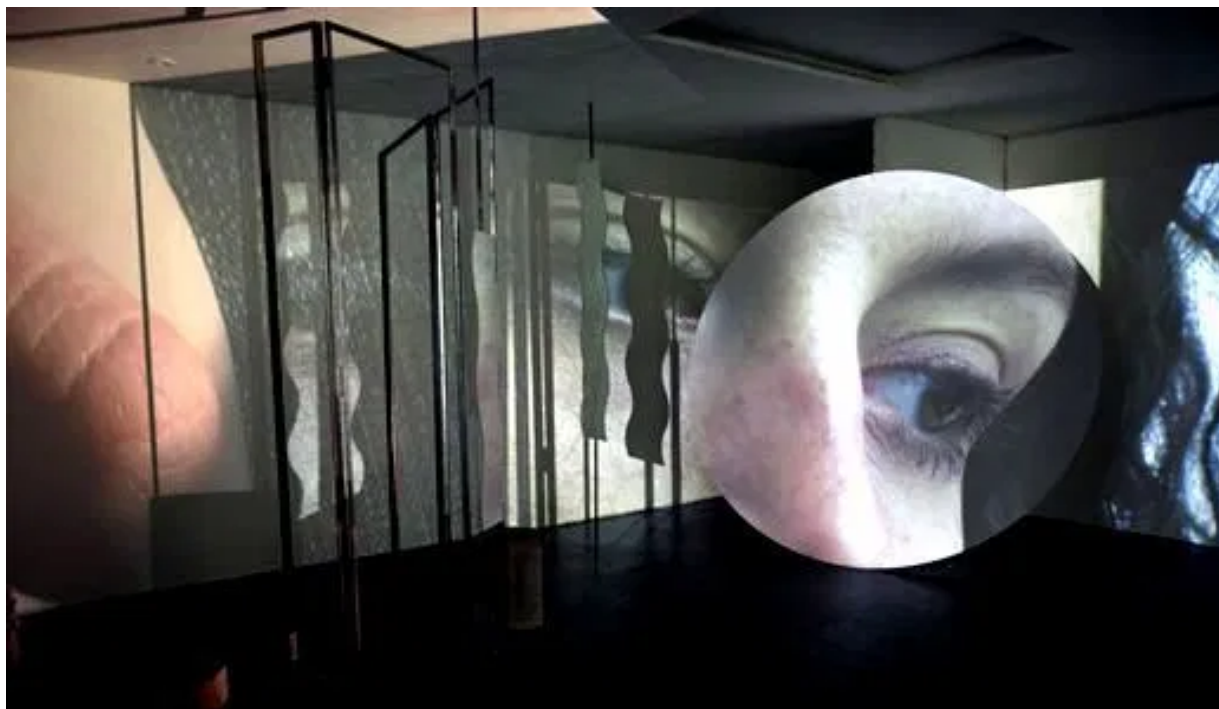


Ilona Sagar: Unsound House @ Carslaw St* Lukes



“Outgoing optimists”, “apathetic indifference”, “traditional”, “transitional”, “sociocentric” are a few of Ilona Sagar’s slogans appearing on her video installation of ‘Unsound House’, currently on show at the playhouse of Carslaw St* Lukes. Sagar is the artist behind some great recent achievements including a nomination for the Dazed & Confused Casio G-Shock 30th Anniversary Awards, Converse highlight of the week and forthcoming projects coinciding with this year’s Frieze art fair and the ICA Art Licks Annual. While she is at an initial stage of a commission for the Architectural Association in London, her residency at the Villa Arson in Nice and VISIO in Florence will take place next month.

Her immense interest in social loci and their interface with human behaviourism (or vice versa) generates disconcerting narratives able or unable to penetrate the viewer’s acuity of reality. The Playhouse space seems like a box, almost giving you the impression of an industrial or factory container. Sagar has, in fact, transformed it into the likes of a show home. Its spatial arrangement incorporates a three screen installation accompanied by mirror pieces reflecting not only the amorphous sculptures posing in front of them but also the moving projected images. The carefully edited soundtrack is in congruence with the sequence of imagery and pronounces an emerging deviance, reminiscent of the congenital bewilderment a show home can effortlessly generate.



The repetition of independently meaningful slogans appears like a piece of abstract dadaist poetry, although this time each word has an [in]direct reference to consumerism and its immediate impact on everyday life. Sagar’s micro-environment challenges its audience to decipher the orchestrated reality and decide not only on its factual origins but also on its effects on their personal and social trajectories.



Ilona Sagar talked to REVma -/+ about her work:

REVma -/+: Your narrative encompasses elements from the private and public domain focusing on spaces closely related to our everyday life. Why do aspects of quotidian social behaviourism inspire you?

I.S.: The shared codes of the museum, gallery, civic space, church and theatre and virtual realm have become the foundations of my practice because they demonstrate a clarity of spatial and social structure which can be universally understood. This interest in spatial politics and language is central to my thinking. I often use verbal and semantic languages to create works which strive to form a visual and oral syntax. Illusion and material [dis]honesty set the stage for works which seek to seduce, alluding to something familiar yet other. ‘Unsound House’, currently installed at Carslaw St* Lukes, is a piece which demonstrates my interest in these types of domain. The piece is an abstract exploration of the language of the mediocre and ‘middle ground’. The three-screen installation explores the semiotics present in the architecture and design of a show home. The installation weaves meaning from beguiling imagery which attempt to raise the mundane into a grandiose and more baroque narrative. The Soundtrack is able to guide an audience through the work, giving them something to hold onto and position themselves within, or it can be a schism creating disorientating and unsettling experience.

REVma -/+: What led you employ the audiovisual medium for your chosen visual language?

I.S.: Initially, I thought I wanted to work in the theatre, directing or acting. I quickly realised that I couldn’t make things the way I wanted to within the profession. I think elements of that can be seen in my work. I work with language abstractly and employ the notion of theatre as a material within my work. I’m fascinated by the bond between the physical, sculptural form and the less tangible effects of video, photography and performance. Sound has always been a key element in my practice. Audio acts as both a dislocation and a connecting element which has a profound impact on our physical and cognitive experience of the world. I work organically with field recordings, captured during the process of filming. In a number of recent works I have collaborated with sound designer Doug Haywood.

A significant aspect of my practice is the broad cross-disciplinary dialogue which it generates. I have previously collaborated with people from a range of disciplines, including dancers, choreographers, writers and architects. I enjoy the challenge of trespassing on other forms and approaches to producing a written, performed or built piece. Each discipline has its own specific language and framework. When you step as an outsider into another discipline, all of the methods which they take for granted are alien and exciting to you. They become almost abstract material to work with. I have formed some lasting partnerships through previous collaboration and there is always an on-going dialogue which feeds into each practice. I am currently working with Adam Nathaniel Furman, a writer and architect. We have worked together on a number of projects. I previously asked Adam to write the text piece to accompany ‘Degrees of Enclosure’ which was screened at the Barbican Art Gallery and more recently we have collaborated on ‘Arcadian Drift’ which was commissioned for the Visionary Trading Project and Arts Council England at Guest Project Space.

REVma -/+: Tell us about your forthcoming film screening at the ICA for Art Licks Annual and your COS x Frieze commission. What do they entail?

I.S.: COS x Frieze Commissioned me to make work for their Covent Garden store. A shop window is a difficult space to occupy as its loaded with connotations, but this is also why I loved making the work. I have taken their recent campaign that was shot outside the iconic unite d’habitation by Corbusier as a starting point. The work looks at the veneer of the brand and attempts to decode the ‘props’ and imagery that it appropriates. Art Licks invited seventy young and emerging artists who have contributed to the magazine to take part in the Annual. I will be screening a new film at the ICA called ‘My Eyes’. ‘My Eyes’ demonstrates a new direction in my use of film. The importance of an online presence, and the collective anxiety associated with connecting and projecting ourselves to the world has resulted in a dislocation of body from self and identity. Astral Projection and other pseudo-spiritual methods such as lucid dreaming become analogies of a general social dislocation of visceral flesh from identity. By using social media such as YouTube the attempt to be genuine is overpowered by the superficial manner in which we consume such media. They represent a desire to confess, parade and display our vulnerability to a largely anonymous collective.

REVma -/+: I sense an immense need for visual experimentation. How do you see your art evolving in 5 years from now?

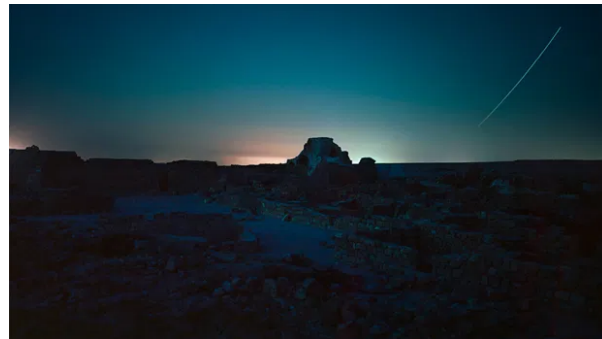
I.S.: Technology is always progressing at an accelerated speed. I don’t think I will ever stop experimenting, I think that what I choose to experiment with will come more and more advanced and immersive. **Kostas Prapoglou**

12/10/2012

- PREVIOUS

NEXT +

REVma -/+ LATEST



REVma -/+ SUPPORTS

