



Are We All Addicts Now?

.....
 Furtherfield Gallery, Finsbury Park, London

16 September - 12 November 2017
 Sat-Sun, 11am - 5pm or by appointment

Private View: Friday 15 September, 6 - 8pm

The exhibition and research project *Are We All Addicts Now?* explores the seductive and addictive qualities of the digital.

Artist Katriona Beales' work addresses the sensual and tactile conditions of her life lived online: the saturated colour and meditative allure of glowing screens, the addictive potential of infinite scroll and notification streams. Her new body of work for *Are We All Addicts Now?* re-imagines the private spaces in which we play

out our digital existence. The exhibition includes glass sculptures containing embedded screens, moving image works and digitally printed textiles. Beales' work is complemented by a new sound-art work by artist and curator Fiona MacDonald : Feral Practice.

Beales celebrates the sensuality and appeal of online spaces, but criticises how our interactions get channeled through platforms designed to be addictive – how corporations use various 'gamification' and 'neuro-marketing' techniques to keep the 'user' on-device, to drive endless circulation, and monetise our every click. She suggests that in succumbing to online behavioural norms we emerge as 'perfect capitalist subjects'.

For Furtherfield, Beales has constructed a sunken 'bed' into which visitors are invited to climb, where a glowing glass orb flutters with virtual moths repeatedly bashing

the edges of an embedded screen. A video installation, reminiscent of a fruit machine, displays a drum of hypnotically spinning images whose rotation is triggered by the movement of gallery visitors. Beales recreates



Tracking Pattern (2017) Katriona Beales

the peculiar, sometimes disquieting, image clashes experienced during her insomniac journeys through endless online picture streams - beauty products lining up with death; naked cats with armed police.

Glass-topped tables support the amorphous curves of heavy glass sculptures, which refract the multi-coloured light of tiny screens hidden inside. Visualisations of eye-tracking data (harvested live from gallery visitors) scatter across the ceiling. On the exterior wall of the gallery, an LED scrolling sign displays text Beales' has compiled, based on comments from online forums about internet addiction.

Where Beales addresses the near-inescapability of machine-driven connection, Feral Practice draws us into the networks in nature. *Mycorrhizal Meditation* is a sound-art work for free download, accessed via posters in Furtherfield Gallery and across Finsbury Park. *MM* takes the form of a guided meditation, journeying through the human body and down into the 'underworld' of living soil, with its mycorrhizal network formed of plant roots and fungal threads. It combines spoken word and sound recordings of movement and rhythm made in wooded places. Feral Practice complicates the idea of nature as 'ultimate digital detox', and alerts us to the startling interconnectivity of beyond-human nature, the 'wood-wide-web' that pre-dates our digital connectivity by millennia.

MORE ABOUT ARE WE ALL ADDICTS NOW?

Are We All Addicts Now? has been developed in collaboration with artist-curator Fiona MacDonald : Feral Practice, clinical psychiatrist Dr Henrietta Bowden-Jones, and curator Vanessa Bartlett.

Accompanying the exhibition, a book designed by Stefan Schafer and edited by Vanessa Bartlett and Henrietta Bowden-Jones, brings together Beales' and MacDonald's artwork and writing with essays from contributors in the fields of anthropology, digital culture, psychology and philosophy. This book is the first interdisciplinary study of the emerging field of internet addiction. Contributors will discuss their essays at a symposium convened by Vanessa Bartlett at Central Saint Martins in November 2017. Advanced copies of the book are on sale at the Liverpool University Press website

liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/products/100809



Are We All Addicts Now? book cover (2017) Stefan Schafer

Beales' work 'Entering the Machine Zone' has been co-commissioned with Science Gallery London. An iteration of the work will be presented as part of HOOKED, the opening season of the new Science Gallery London, curated by Hannah Redler.

In the run up to the exhibition, artists Charlotte Webb and Connor Rigby have been commissioned to produce a series of gifs and tweets to stimulate debate around the designed-for-addiction nature of digital devices, and the ethics and politics that surround this. Join the conversation @furtherfield on Twitter and Instagram using the hashtag #addictsnow



Follow

Glowing light of screens makes us #addictsnow - they are the mini-suns we bask in to keep away the dark bit.ly/2eQw2Qd



6:10 am - 27 Jul 2017

28 Retweets 39 Likes



2 28 39

View more of the commissioned gifs and tweets here: bit.ly/2vGUxVY

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Katriona Beales is an artist who makes digital artefacts, moving image and installation, stressing the physicality of digital life. *Are We All Addicts Now?* develops Beales' 2015 work 'White Matter' (a FACT commission for 'Group Therapy: Mental Distress in a Digital Age') which is showing at the University of New South Wales, Sydney as part of Anxiety Festival (Sept 2017). Beales' received an MA from Chelsea College of Arts and has an artist profile on Rhizome.org www.katrionabeales.com

Fiona MacDonald is an artist, curator and writer specializing in human-nonhuman relationship. As Feral Practice, she works in co-production with a collective of human and nonhuman persons. Current projects include Foxing, (see PEER London, 2017) Ant-ic Actions (see Ethical Entanglements, Bloomsbury Press, forthcoming) Homo Mycelium, and Wood to World (London, Kent, Aberdeen 2015-17). www.feralpractice.com

Vanessa Bartlett is a researcher and curator based between Australia and the UK. She studies and teaches at UNSW Art & Design, Sydney where her research investigates connections between digital technologies and mental health through reflective curatorial practice. Her recent exhibition *Group Therapy: Mental Distress in a Digital Age* showed at FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology), UK in 2015 and opens at UNSW Galleries Sydney in September 2017. www.vanessabartlett.com

Dr. Charlotte Webb is an artist and deviant academic. She speaks and exhibits internationally, focusing on the web as a medium for creative practice, critical thinking and collective action. www.otheragents.net

Exhibition Tour of *Are We All Addicts Now?* with Ruth Catlow and Katriona Beales

Saturday 16th September 2017, 2 - 4 pm

Furtherfield Gallery

Join Furtherfield co-director Ruth Catlow and artist Katriona Beales to find out more about the works featured in the exhibition *Are We All Addicts Now?* and to discuss the issues that it raises around digital addiction and online behaviour.

FREE | booking essential

Late Night Opening & Film Screening

Friday 29th September 2017, 5 - 8.30pm

Furtherfield Gallery & Commons

A late night opening of the *Are We All Addicts Now?* exhibition, followed by a screening of artists' moving image work that has informed the development of the exhibition.

Gallery Open: 5 - 7pm

Screening: 7 - 8.30pm

FREE

Mycorrhizal Event with Fiona MacDonald : Feral Practice

Saturday 21st October 2017, 2 - 4pm

Furtherfield Commons

Fiona MacDonald: Feral Practice presents a lecture, a performance, and a fungi walk. Informed by the history, art and science of human-fungal relations, these experiences explore themes of reciprocity, intuitive and nonverbal interconnection between people, psychedelic consciousness, fungal songs, shamanic journeying, and plant communication.

FREE | booking essential

***Are We All Addicts Now?* Symposium at CSM**

Tuesday 7th November, 6.30-9pm

Central St Martins, University of the Arts London, 1 Granary Square, London, N1C 4AA

Psychologists, philosophers and artists come together to discuss the emerging diagnosis of internet addiction. Taking into account our precarious economic and political climate, they will ask whether internet addiction should be understood as a form of illness, or simply a sensible adaptation to our current environment? As increasing numbers of people struggle to moderate their online behaviours, this event will also explore artists' strategies for counteracting the seductive, addiction-making qualities of digital space.

Convened by curator Vanessa Bartlett

Presented in partnership with London LASER

FREE | booking essential

Visual Matrix Workshop with Vanessa Bartlett

Thursday 2nd November, 4-6.30pm

Furtherfield Gallery

Join curator Vanessa Bartlett for a research workshop responding to works in the *Are We All Addicts Now?* exhibition. The visual matrix is a new psychosocial research technique that we are using to generate audience response to this project. Content generated during this session will inform our evaluation of the exhibition. For more information contact info@vanessabartlett.com

FREE | booking essential



FURTHERFIELD GALLERY

Furtherfield Gallery is located in the middle of Finsbury Park attracting large numbers of diverse visitors reflecting the Gallery's unusual location. Jenny Judova of Fad magazine picked Furtherfield Gallery as one of the top five galleries in London that show new media art and ArtSlant featured Furtherfield Gallery in 'The Best Non-Profit Art Spaces in London'.

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ABOUT FURTHERFIELD

Furtherfield is an internationally renowned arts organisation specialising in labs, exhibitions and debate for increased, diverse participation with emerging technologies. At Furtherfield Gallery and Furtherfield Lab in London's Finsbury Park, we engage more people with digital creativity, reaching across barriers through unique collaborations with international networks of artists, researchers and partners. Through art Furtherfield seeks new imaginative responses as digital culture changes the world and the way we live.

"There is no other gallery like Furtherfield. Situated in the middle of Finsbury Park they attract people from all walks of life and focus on contemporary technology and how it affects the lives of people and the world we live in." (Liliane Lijn, artist)

www.furtherfield.org

THANKS TO

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