

Curator's Diary (final days before Private View)

I spent the last weeks going to the gallery to check on the progress of the installation. Until yesterday, the six screens were lonely, lying on their backs or leaning against the wall where they were to be separated, equally distant from one another, a spatial symmetry that was going to prove, what? The dates, 1980–1990, etc. were the first to be displayed in their burgundy wine colour, sitting proud against the blank wall, equidistant like the screens were meant to be. The remaining texts, quotes in capital dress, were rolled up on the floor, waiting to be pronounced either patronizing curatorial “wallpaper”, something of a “dreary necessity”, or moments of insight, “ephemeral literature”. Here's an example of one of the short ones:

THE CONTEXT OF DISPLAY IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE IMAGE DISPLAYED – Bettina Funcke

Yesterday was a different story. All six screens were hung on the wall in their predetermined places. Some even had a couple of headsets hanging off the corners (they will be hung on hooks beside the screens.) Our tech-guru, Peter Courtemanche was walking between them, as a doctor in a military hospital, doing his magic to bring them to life and, most important, to check on the adjacent “small screens” that were playing the role of wall labels, displaying the title of what's playing, by whom and what the work was about, even a QR code to connect our phones' cameras to the artist's website. You will need to have your “guidebook” at hand to get a fuller picture. Before long all screens were alive and it was a sight to behold. The wall text would stop you in your tracks, gazing left and right and straight ahead at the three walls that will speak the name of videopoetry in a tongue you will only hear and understand if you're wearing a headset. Except for one.

In the third corner of the large gallery, hearing the breathed-forth words of a triptych video titled *Thanksgiving Address*, a sound cone comes to life when you enter its umbrella hanging from the ceiling. The brainchild of Jason Lewis and Skawennati Tricia Fragnito, who appear on the left and right beside the overhead shot of a plate of turkey, yams, squash, stuffing and cranberries, a traditional indigenous prayer is modified to address technological concerns: “We thank the Creator for the computer, the platform from which we can create and communicate.” I'm praying for a strong Wi-Fi signal on Saturday when the throngs will enter our temporarily sacred space. May our thoughts guard the 40 years of non-illustrative videopoems (except for Paul Bogaert's *You're Lying and You Filter* but even that's OK because after all, isn't it all about irony?)

I leave without seeing the wall text installed. I'll just have to pray the font is large and the effect is ... well, complicated?

Tom Konyves